

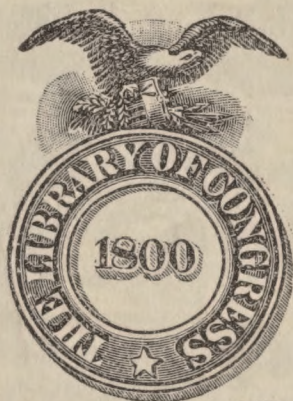
The  
Leading Lady



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By  
William Morgan Hannon





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*'I might be a failure as an actress,  
but I'll be a success as a woman.'*



# ✓ The Leading Lady

∞ A Novel with a Preface



By William Morgan Hannon ✓

Author of

“The Photodrama--Its Place Among the Fine Arts”



Latin Quarter Publishing Co.

New Orleans

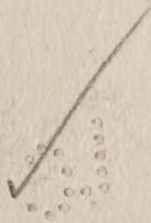
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To the  
Noble Women  
Who Have Graced  
The American Stage &  
Screen







## PREFACE

It is almost unseemly to ask an author to justify his preface. The critics in harmony (for once!) ask: Why apologize for the preface—only? Isn't it hard enough to justify what lies between the preface and the back cover? There is no mercy for the critic who stoops so low as to become a novelist! A good man may live down a college education. But forgive a critic for turning novelist? Never! You might as well ask an intelligent man to read professorial annotations to Shakespeare with pleasure and profit! You might as well ask a man who wants to think to go to see a serious play by a Broadway dramatist with a purpose!

You see, when a man ceases to be a critic and becomes a novelist, he ceases to regard "mud-slinging" as a comedy, and realizes that it might produce tragedy. He then realizes what a worthless lot the critics (i. e., the other critics, of course!) are. And there is no chance to placate his former confreres. He is a traitor to his guild, and must pay perfectly horrible penalties for his offense, to-wit: he must read their indictments of his brain-child! It may be a wise father who knows his own child. But most assuredly it is a wiser author who knows his own work—after reading what the critics say about it! In fact, when an author wants to know what his book doesn't deal with he reads what the critics say about it. The clipping bureaus are purveyors of delectably unconscious humor!

In short, we hereby solemnly declare that in the course of human events—and literary criticism—it has become necessary to have all critics without reservation, and without regard to previous aptitude for



destroying art-products, bound, gagged, and caged as arch libellers of literature!

And now for those prodigious despoilers of white paper! We mean novelists, of course. When it comes to wasting words, it's a "draw" between the best-seller novelists and the lawyers. The difference is this: the novelists have the facility for saying the same thing a dozen times by using *different* words!

You see, a man becomes a full-fledged novelist when he covers three or four hundred pages of white paper with black ink regarding a subject that he doesn't know the first thing about. For example, if he lives in the celery fields of Kalamazoo, he writes about the everglades of Florida! The same novelist in a picture house exclaims: "How I hate the photographic exactitude of the screen." He will then proceed to call himself a Realist with a capital "R"! He might even call himself an Actualist! Yes, the photodrama is an awful art—to the man who is not a past-master of plot construction!

Lest we forget: Don't mind this preface. We have been very considerate! Why, we have even omitted a prologue and epilogue in connection with it! Then, too, we simply must do something in self-defense! Wait till you see the novel! It's a shame to take such chances with eyesight that could be more profitably ruined in a "movie" palace! And with the high cost of paper, too! We ring in the white-paper motif so that you will suspect that it is a novel by virtue of the fact that all you need for a novel is cloth cover, black ink, and aforesaid white paper! But chronic readers of best-sellers know this already. Wherefore, we desist.

Seriously: this business of stuffing sugar-coated criticisms—some of them of questionable relevancy—



down the throats of the novel-reading public may or may not be wise. We think, however, that the thinking reader won't mind the process, and might even relish it, inasmuch as it is in palatable form and broken doses!

And now to grow serious, which is another term for being perfectly inane! We will put it in the form of a question at once pertinent and impertinent: Why do so many dull people write novels? Seriously: Why doesn't a truly clever and versatile woman like Miss Helen Rowland write novels instead of syndicating her "copy" through the ephemeral channels of the newspapers? We are not deriding the press, but simply estimating it. Certain departments of the New York "Times" and "Sun", the Springfield "Republican", Kansas City "Star", Chicago "Tribune", and Louisville "Courier-Journal" win our unqualified admiration. And there are others, too, of course. Some good newspapers are spoiled by spineless editorials. Sometimes the editor is built that way; sometimes he isn't. Sometimes the real editor is the man who signs the checks! Then people call the editor a mollycoddle, and the paper a "sheet". The other papers usually refer to it delectably as "our esteemed contemporary". If we were running a nice, safe, well-behaved, circulation-respecting, ad-chasing, and news-escaping newspaper, and anybody alluded to us as "our esteemed contemporary" we would forthwith ask the courts to extend the doctrine of libel *per se*! Some day we are going to start a newspaper without an editor. But, then, we know several now that get along nicely that way!

In accordance with our habit of paying tribute to talent where it is due, let us revert to Miss Rowland. We know Miss Rowland only through her works as



they have appeared in newspapers for several years. We are perfectly willing to risk our critical standing by stating that she is the most brilliant woman writer in America. And we certainly don't know who is entitled to second place among her sex. No, we haven't forgotten Mrs. Wharton. We said brilliant writer. Mrs. Wharton is a great artist, and we can't forget "Ethan Frome". In fact, we go so far as to say that this novel will bear critical comparison with "The Scarlet Letter" by our beloved Hawthorne. Could we say more? We are not making wild-eyed guesses, but delivering coldly critical judgments. Sometimes such judgments prove boomerangs. But we'll risk them just the same. "The Custom of the Country" you ask? You cruel, cruel man! In retaliation (?) we suggest that you read Miss Rowland's writings sometimes. We suggest this even if you think Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, and Gilbert Chesterton have a monopoly on sparkling English.

And now for a word about the greatest plot builder America ever produced. He is neither dramatist, novelist, nor short-story writer. But a photodramatist. And if you *know* the photodrama, you will know that it requires more real plot than any art-form in the world's history. It takes a marvelously clever set of actors, directors, et al. to take a two per cent. solution of plot (a good average for the modern novel!) and make it last through five reels of *action*. That is why many novelists "fall down" when they try to produce "stupid movie stuff". The stupidity doesn't lie in the material! Mr. C. Gardner Sullivan has proven this repeatedly.

Mr. Sullivan (and we know him only from the screen and through correspondence, and not personally as we do know many other prominent writers and



critics) is, in our judgment, as far ahead of any other photodramatist as Shakespeare is ahead of any other English dramatist. Indeed, more so. For Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus" is greater than one-half of Shakespeare's plays. The plain truth is that Shakespeare came pretty nearly writing the worst as well as the very best plays in English *literature*. We said *literature*, not an approximation thereto.

Since we can't keep Shakespeare out of any literary discussion that arises, the next best thing is to bring him in, of course! Shakespeare screened? Impossible! Well, we pay tribute to Messrs. Noble and Bushman for their artistic screen presentation of "Romeo and Juliet". It was the most satisfyingly beautiful photodrama that we ever witnessed. Miss Bayne was glorious as Juliet.

We know some New York producers, writers, and critics who smiled as we told them that literary men alone should handle the sub-titles. Let them read the sub-titles that the said Shakespeare put into the above production, and then tell us that we are "theorizing". But the producers only a few years ago were afraid of D. W. Griffith because he was a "visionary"!

And now for the "drammer". There is no use writing it d-r-a-m-a. To do so would be comical. Considering the poor quality of modern dramatic effusions, we wonder why the plays of Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, and Bernard Shaw do not play eternally. The managers answer: "Box-office receipts don't justify their production". Then, in heaven's name, why not let some new blood into the game? Why indirectly choke off new talent by treating manuscripts by new writers with so little consideration? The testimony of Mr. Max Marcin, author of "The House of Glass", "Cheating Cheaters", etc., in a recent issue of "The



Theatre Magazine'' illustrates how difficult it is to get New York's theatrical managers to read plays. No sour grapes here, as we have yet to write a drama, still less try to "place" one. But we didn't live at, in, on, under, and above Times Square for nearly a year, and meet personally several of the country's biggest producers without gathering a few impressions. The concentration of theatrical interests in and about Times Square is as bad as the concentration of the people's money in Wall Street. And we have many friends at Times Square. Nor do we mean to deny its glamor and glory.

It would seem that we are very severe critics. We are as regards Art, though we are distinctly humanitarian, politically and economically. The mediocre should not be allowed to survive in the art world. To combine a Darwinian phrase with a felicitous modification by Mr. George W. Cable: there should be a "survival of the fittest and the fairest". Let the diamond-cut-diamond rule hold sway. Then, literary gems might result from the process. After all, it is only the half-baked artist who loses heart. For: the creative artist does not possess the creative force; the creative force possesses the creative artist.

We have tried to deal with generalities wherever possible. However, a special case of importance forces itself upon us. We refer to the use by many professional critics of the term "melodramatic" as synonymous with "sensational". Clearly a "situation" in drama, epic, novel, short-story, or photodrama might produce melodrama without sensation, or sensation without melodrama. This is elementary. And critics should avoid this error for the reason that melodrama (unlike the term *drama*) is as easy to define as it is to create.



One word about the relative values of "technical" or "professional" criticism, and the so-called "naive" or "human" variety. *Technically*, an author usually knows what's wrong with his work; but he usually doesn't know what's *humanly* wrong with its architect! Therein lies the value of the naive critic. The naive critic sometimes goes to the heart of the matter with directness that is amazing, revealing, and sometimes decidedly upsetting. The technical critic you can almost afford to laugh at! If he says your work is poor Realism, you answer that it is Romanticism in disguise! If he pronounces you a poor plot-builder, tell him that Shakespeare was apparently worse, as he borrowed thirty-five out of thirty-seven of his dramatic plots! But when an avowedly non-literary man with intelligence tells you that he doesn't "get your stuff", you know that your place is "on the shelf"—and not the book-shelf.

We don't mind professional critics knocking holes in our work! (Oh, no! Oh, no!) That is what they're for! An author might survive the professional criticisms, but it is the consensus of opinion among the naive critics who eventually make or break him. The naive critic often represents eventually the universal suffrage of mankind. In short, the voice of the technical critic is to our ears as sounding *brass* or a tinkling cymbal! We might as well be bold, because we know already what is in store for us at the hands of the critics!

The photodrama has caused the rise of a new set of critics of a public nature or status never before known. Their status is truly *sui generis*. We allude to the members of the various boards of censorship.

In our view, there are two significant facts about these boards: first, the fact that the courts of this



country have had the sense to uphold them on the ground that their function is a proper exercise of the *police power* (a legal doctrine or concept of a constitutional nature too complex for discussion here) and *not* an infringement of the constitutional guarantee called the freedom of the press; and, second, the fact that these boards are a genuine necessity from an ethical or moral viewpoint. Indeed, the legal decisions are founded upon this assumption, and would not be sustainable *on principle* if they were not so founded.

The film companies which claim the boards deliver condemnatory judgments by anticipation need new talent in their legal departments. They should consult an experienced constitutional lawyer. We seriously advise this procedure! For the various States of this Union preserve the right under the Federal Constitution to protect the morals of their youths. This doctrine is not moot. And we see too many evil influences operating on youth now to add to the trouble by prurient pictures. We think too much of the photodrama to see it descend to a degenerate level. It's a great art, and a fine art. We propose to keep it on its pedestal. Besides, we think youth the greatest thing in the world, and stand ready to champion its cause at all times and in all places with monograph or brief.

We had one fight with a board of censorship. It happened when the Board of Censorship of Pennsylvania knocked out a photodrama on which we were the scenario editor. We knew that the picture was essentially moral, and so secured a "rehearing" on the picture, and made a special trip to Philadelphia to argue the "case". Did the Board prove to be composed of monsters as the general impression in film circles in New York indicated? Certainly not. We



never met in a business way a more charming and courteous lot of men and women. We virtually discussed the matter *en famille*. We gave them our interpretation of the picture, and after argument pro and con, a compromise was reached. They reversed their judgment by agreeing that the picture could be shown in Pennsylvania, and asked for a change in a few subtitles and the elimination of a few scenes. This we conceded. We left Philadelphia as usual with the impression that New Yorkers knew as little about it as they do about Hong Kong. But, then, there are many fine things in Philadelphia that New York may well feel a bit jealous about.

We can poke fun at every kind of critic but M'seu Puritanical Critic, of the holier-than-thou mien. We don't respect him enough to treat him with levity. We prefer to jump on him with both feet at the outset. If there is a grain of evil in a thing, he, with his eye for evil, ferrets it out, and seeing it with microscopic vision, tries to transfer the enlarged version to other minds as the originol one. And, of course, M'seu Puritanical Critic is not necessarily a descendant of those four hundred thousand families who came over in the Mayflower! Far be it from us to thus indict New England's sturdy stock. Unlike the *Edelweiss*, he does not thrive on the heights. He must have his nose in the mire. He is a fungous growth that springs up everywhere. He is the missing link between the hopelessly immoral man and the avowedly unmoral one.

A stock question of M'seu Puritanical Critic is this: How *can* nice girls go into musical shows? The mere generality of the question shows an indiscriminating mind. For there are musical shows and musical shows. Also, there are chorus girls and chorus girls, of course, just as there are lawyers and shysters;



doctors and charlatans; and so on ad infinitum. M'seu Puritanical Critic has his eyes so glued on what he conceives to be a necessarily immoral status that he forgets his political economy.

M'seu, did you ever look at the question from this simple, human point of view? A girl with ambition and artistic taste, and no commercial ability, desires, we'll suppose, two legitimate things: to earn a reasonable income for herself or family, and to get a chance to carve a niche for herself in the theatrical world. She can accomplish the first desire, we'll say, by taking a position behind a counter. She can accomplish both this way: By deciding that it is preferable to stand two hours per day nine times a week in a chorus for Twenty-five Dollars, rather than to stand ten hours a day for six days a week behind a counter for Five Dollars. There is nothing wrong with her mathematics, nor her aim, nor her ambition. Wherefore, be charitable, Mr. Puritanical Critic, if you can't be broad. Why quarrel with her morality by anticipation?

There is a class of critics who specially need to render an account of their stewardships. We allude to many, though certainly not all, of the book reviewers of the newspapers and magazines. Really, many of them give not reviews, but merely perfunctory views, save when they are vivisections! Any intelligent author, however, with a sense of humor (about the only excuse for being an author in our pragmatistical age!) would rather be cleverly "roasted" than tamely praised. If you can get a laugh, brother Critics, by "tearing us up", we'll stand by and laugh with the crowd. When you tickle our risibilities it is difficult to hurt our other sensibilities. For we would rather watch good comedies by and with Charlie Chaplin



(who can really *act* when he "extends himself") than to read Caesar's Commentaries. You perhaps decided that we had some taste. Now you think otherwise? If so, that is only because you don't know what brain-racking, soul-searing work screen comedies require. We'll guarantee to write a reasonably good treatise on law, but we won't guarantee to write a good screen comedy. We know. For we have done both.

Now, kind, patient, and *long-suffering* reader, we trust that the milk of human kindness has not turned to buttermilk herein, as some writer, who displays more wit than literary discretion, has said. For we have tried to be fair. We would rather make the world laugh than do anything else. We'd like to think that this is the thing we do best. That is why we treated many serious things with levity, but not extreme levity, we trust.

Now, we called the thing that fills up the space not occupied by this preface a novel. But you needn't agree with us. We told you that the critic turned novelist. Maybe you'll doubt it. You read beyond the preface at your peril!

Seriously: we state that we have given the novelistic theme a fair interpretation. An author occupies in our judgment a semi-official, or, as a lawyer would say, a quasi-official relationship to the public. In short, he should show a spirit of fair play in his treatment of a subject of which he holds himself out to the public as possessing special knowledge. Of course, some allowance must be made for the novelist's "license". Wherefore, do not emphasize too much the places at which the *movie action* in our story takes place. You can substitute New York for Los Angeles in the following pages without going far wrong. Also, brother lawyers, view our sketchy court scene with for-



bearance. The object of the fine arts is to give verisimilitude, not exactitude. We have many times told lawyers this truth in movie houses when they complained that "that fool director" knew nothing about the workings of an actual courtroom. It is well to remember that any class of people constitutes a small portion of the whole community. The details of one man's business or profession are usually boresome to those outside of it. Hence, the artistic value of suggestiveness and bold strokes, as it were.

The words regarding the philosophical direction of pictures that are spoken by the "new director" in chapter XIII represent the quintessence of our essay entitled "Directing Pictures—An Art and a Science Plus". This essay was pronounced "very able" by the Triangle Film Corporation, and endorsed by Mr. Ed. Porter, formerly director-general for the Famous Players, as well as by big men in other film companies.

Nola Studios,  
Bayou St. John,  
New Orleans.

W. M. H.  
December, 1916.











## CHAPTER I.

Maie Courtney bounded down the lane with the grace and agility of a fawn.

Hers was the freshness of young womanhood. Of medium stature, her general make-up was a happy admixture of delicacy and strength. There hovered about her a rosy and aura-like softness and graciousness. Her eyes—vibrant with coruscating fires in animated moods—betokened a magnetic personality. Her lustrous hair fell back from her forehead in long wavy lines. Loving life and hating it by turns, she was temperamental, intense, volatile, moody—at once religious and rebellious, artistic in all things, life like itself the essence of paradox and contradiction, and withal, the apotheosis of sincerity and kindness.

At the end of the lane Maie met Marion Crane, her classmate and chum from the High School. Half breathlessly, she exclaimed:

“Oh, Marion! Did you hear the good news? I expect to go in the movies soon.”

“You don’t mean it, Maie? Do tell me all about it. Heavens! Every girl in town will envy you now.”

“Yes, I met a director this morning, who was passing through here, and stopped over to look up some ‘locations’ for a picture he is about to make. He said I was a fine type, and would



photograph well. Oh! I'm so happy, I could just shout with joy. And just think, I'm not going to be a real 'extra'; I'm going to play a part from the start. Only I don't like the director's looks. He looked at me kind o' funny like."

Here she lapsed into the loosely incorrect but not unpleasant elision that American girls of even college training are apt to use. But, then, Walt Whitman, who committed greater offenses against the great art of poetry, is considered an original genius by many critics, though more discriminating people think that he should be indicted for literary murder in the first degree! Also, a certain William Shakespeare took liberties in the name of poetic license that would make a *mere* scholar—like Lord Bacon, for instance!—shiver in defense of the exactitude that great creative and artistic natures refuse to be bound by. Why not give the American girl a chance to express her glorious personality in her own way?

They saw Jack Harrington. Jack had grown seemingly two or three years older in as many days. A serious aspect that was not at all unbecoming played on his handsome youthful features. He met the girls, and smiled. He caught Maie's twinkling eye, and the faintest flush rose in his face.



“Did you hear the good news, Jack?” cried Marion. “Maie’s going in the movies.” And she pinched Maie lovingly on the arm as she said the words.

“Yes,” answered Jack, moodily. “Good news? You girls see fun in everything. Why should Maie leave her home and mother for the movies? They are not a path of violets and roses for everybody. I’ll take you down to meet old Charlie Mason, the property man at the Majestic Theatre. He’ll tell you about them. Charlie has seen everything in the show business. He has been scene-shifter, circus bill-poster, stage carpenter and the last two years studio manager for the Moon Players in Los Angeles.”

“All right,” answered Maie, challengingly. “I’ll go with you to see Charlie Mason—if—if my mother will let me.”

“Ah! Ha! There you go! Must ask your mother, eh? Now what chance will you have to ask your mother anything when you are over a thousand miles away in Los Angeles?” She smiled roguishly at Jack as she made the remark: “Pshaw! That’ll be all right. I’ll take care of myself—by myself, Mr. Jack.”

Jack was evidently disappointed. But then Maie’s tiniest rebuff was sufficient to accomplish that despite his robust frame.



“Well,” said Jack with an air of triumph and finality, “I’ll take you down to the Majestic Saturday afternoon. Is that a go?”

“Surely is,” answered Maie. “I should say so,” chimed in Marion.

“All right, then. Saturday at one o’clock at Johnson’s drug store. We can walk to the Majestic from there in five minutes.”

At eleven o’clock on Saturday Marion was at Maie’s house—though she was scheduled to get there at twelve thirty. Maie was dressed at ten thirty, and jumped all over Marion for being late! By quarter before twelve, they had passed and repassed Johnson’s drug store five times. Such is the spirit of youth when enthusiasm weds itself to it.

Jack himself was rather punctual. He passed Johnson’s drug store at twelve thirty—on business! But the girls were not there then. They were killing time buying things that they didn’t need in the nearby department stores!

Finally, the youthful triumvirate met at twelve forty-five, and started out for the quarters of Charlie Mason. Jack was familiar with theatrical nomenclature, and did not care to have Maie and Marion get within earshot of some of the expletives that fly about promiscuously behind the footlights. So he requested the girls to wait at the stage door while he



went in to see whether Charlie's favorite chewing tobacco still had the same magic influence on his glib tongue.

He found Charlie with his assistant "off stage" in the wings.

"Hello, Charlie, old top, how are you? Say, old man, I have two movie-struck girls with me I want you to talk to. Good friends, you know. So give 'em straight dope. No fairy tales, mind you."

"You kin count on me. I'll be wid you in a minnit." And he gave orders to his assistant to place a piece of scenery so that people in the left-hand box would get the illusion of a woodland, and not see it in the light of a naked theatrical accessory.

Charlie walked slowly over to Jack and said: "Where you bin all dis time? Don't you handle teatrical stuff for the 'News' any more?"

"No. I'm handling Sunday feature stuff now. Better money, with theatrical matters so dead. By George, I'd better get my girl friends before they lose their nerve and go home." And he ran swiftly to the stage door.

The girls were talking nervously and joyously when Jack beckoned them to enter. Their hearts were beating like trip hammers. They walked in mincingly like cats on a thin-boarded fence.

Charlie saw them, and shouted: "To your



right, ladies. Watch out you don't stumble over de props near your feet."

Charlie proceeded to improvise chairs for his "company." An actor's wardrobe trunk, two stage "horses," and a broken stool were arranged in roughly circular fashion. Then he pulled a recalcitrant lock over his bald spot, and smilingly blandly and grandly at the approaching girls awaited an introduction.

With smiling gusto, Jack said:

"Miss Courtney and Miss Crane, I want to present to you Mr. Charlie Mason, the oldest showman in the world—but the youngest man."

The girls acknowledged the introduction with due graciousness and waited for Charlie to speak.

"Well," began Charlie in drawling fashion, "you two goils wants to know somethin' about de movies, I believe? I bin in dis show business for tirty years. I seen all kinds come an' go. An' I tell yer somtin' in de old days we had actors, not scenery-eaters. I ain't eddicated, but I dun seen de actors of de old school, as dey calls it, an' I kin tell yer dey could sure move yer. As dey say in de history books, I seen de rise and fall of de drammer; I seen de twenty-thirty mellerdrammer come on de boards an' den go off when de movies come on. De show bizness ain't wot it used to be." Suddenly he



checked himself. "I almost forgot you goils ain't interested in de show bizness genrally; you wants to know about de movies only."

"Oh! that's all right," said Maie. "Go ahead. We're mightily interested in all you are saying."

"Now de foist ting you want to know about de movies ain't a ting at all; it's a person. It's de man what dey calls de deerector. Some of dese deerectors is good fellers—an' good deerectors too o' course. Some of 'em is gentlemen—but heaps of 'em ain't. But some of dem is no good—eider as men or as deerectors, fer dat matter. Tree nice goils dun quit the studio when I worked in Jacksonville because dey wouldn't be friends wid de deerector. De management sed dey ain't got time to bodder wit' merality—deir bizness is to make pictures dat sell wedder good or bad. Yes siree, young ladies, wedder you is successful depens' sometimes on de kind of deerector you gits ratter den your actin' ability. De poor public sometimes ses 'Where did she come from?' Dat usually means she is a frien' of de deerector, and de management is blind. But den sometimes de management es jest as bad—no tellin'. Dere's no use; de show bizness is a funny game. Dere's no tellin' how some people holds deir jobs. And de poor public ses to itself: 'Gee, but dat's a



ham. But den I mus' be mistaken becuz dese producers mus' know more 'bout actresses den me.' "Yes," said Charlie, rising for a moment to strike a match on a sign which read "No Smoking." He proceeded to light his corn cob pipe, and then threw the lighted match into a heap of scraps that would make a fire insurance man turn pale.

A few violent puffs at his pipe, and Charlie resumed: "Of course, all de women in de show bizness ain't *bad*. Some of de finest in de land is in it. But wot I means is dat a goil eider needs her mudder or mus' have a strong will and patience to come out on top if she is very purty. So you two goils wants to go in de show bizness, eh? Well, if you wuz my darters I'd see you drowned foist. Dat's wot I tink 'bout it all. And I bin in his game for tirty-tree years, ever since I wuz nineteen years old. De show bizness is de place for rich goils wot can have deir parents look 'em over, not fer de poor goils wot mus' eat while de rises in dey perfeshun and p'obably sinks while dey is doin' it."

"But," broke in Maie, turning a little pale as she saw some of her dreams vanishing, "you said some of the girls were—were all right."

"Yes, miss, dat's right. But it's a hard road. Dat's why most of de show people hev stiff-looking, pasty appearances—what you call hard



faces. A human bein' kin stan' so much and look nat'ral through it all. But after a time de lines in de face show how tings is goin'. Nice fresh lookin' faces like you two goils hev comes from right livin'. Of course, de movies is better den de old teatrical game in dis perticler, because a goil kin live under home-like cercumstances, and hev her nights to herself."

Jack was quietly watching the effect that the property man's words were having on the impressionable girls. Their enthusiasm was clearly waning, he thought.

"Now, you see Maie," said Jack, his eyes brightening, "what an old hand in the business says? You are too fine for this work."

"But Jack," protested Maie, "I love it. We can't help our feelings—our likes and dislikes, can we?"

It thrilled Marion Crane to watch the glowing expression on Jack's face as he pleaded with Maie. If only she could be in Maie's shoes and Henry Warner in Jack's!

"Maie, dear," broke in Marion, "I believe Jack is right. Yet I feel so sorry for you because I know what a state of ecstasy you were in when you played the lead in our class play at the High School graduation exercises."

"Now, you see, Jack, I'm not stubborn. I simply must express myself in acting just as



my poor old father had to do in painting. If daddy had followed business as he had the chance to do, we might have been wealthy to-day. But he couldn't—he just couldn't. Mother was more matter-of-fact and though she loved him dearly, she could never understand his devotion to portrait painting. But I understood him."

The girl's sincerity touched her companions deeply. Marion kissed her warmly. Maie embraced her friend affectionately, as two large tears fell slowly down her cheeks. Jack looked wistfully away. Charlie cleared his throat and stopped chewing his tobacco.

"You is an artist, little girl," broke in Charlie spontaneously—"a sure-enough artist. Only artists cries over deir work."

Jack looked at his watch. It was three o'clock. They had talked for two hours, yet it seemed only as many minutes.

"We must be going, Charlie," said Jack.

"Well," said the property man rising, "I have told you goils de facts. Mr. Jack knowed I would do dat. Odderwise, he wouldn't bring you to me."

"Oh, we believe you, Mr. Charlie," said Maie simply. "I for one will never forget your kind advice. Thank you so much."



“Not at all, ladies,” answered Charlie. “Dat’s nothin’ to do for a fine young feller like Mr. Jack.”

At the stage door Charlie put his hand on Jack’s shoulder and whispered:

“I don’t blame you for pertectin’ a little goil like dat. Here’s hopin’ she’ll let you pertect her all de time.”

Jack’s face beamed as he saw the soft light in the old man’s eyes.

## CHAPTER II.

Provincialville did not let the arrival of Harry Gay from Broadway disturb the even tenor of its existence. Gay was a leading light on the reportorial staff of the New York “Sunset.” He was sent to Provincialville on an important political assignment. His special duty was “to camp on the trail” of the Hon. Henry Johnson Smith, a retired statesman of the “old school,” who lived in Provincialville. A certain amount of political “copy” daily was essential to the maintenance of the great circulation of the “Sunset.” News was the primary want, of course. But readable fiction was not to be despised! In fact, the city editor of the “Sunset” gave this as the first commandment to the cub reporter: “D—— the facts, if you’ve got a good story.” And he forthwith proceed-



ed to garnish and fortify his statement with numerous dynamic expletives that were no contribution to polite literature. Wherefore, some astute observers said that politics made the "Sunset"—but other equally astute observers said that the "Sunset" made politics!

When Gay arrived in Provincialville he was steeped in the above philosophy. To follow its course was "playing the game," as he saw it. Out of a small town of the Middle West and into New York City at eighteen, he had neither time nor opportunity for a study of abstract morality. His experience of eight years in and among the highways and byways of the world's greatest city had formed this conclusion.

And just about the time that he concluded that he knew all the ins and outs of life, Fate thrust him among the twenty-five thousand inhabitants of Provincialville. As he gazed wearily out of the window of his little hotel, he said to himself: "I'll stagnate in this town." The name of his hotel, painted in large black letters, struck him curiously. He smiled as he thought: "The Walldorf in Provincialville. This was one of life's little ironies."

He left his room and went down to the lobby of the hotel. The place bore a leisurely, contented air. He walked to the desk and spoke to the clerk.



"I might as well get this country-life-in-America stuff thoroughly while I'm here. Do you know any nice private home where I can stay?"

There was the faintest trace of a sneer in Gay's voice and the clerk sensed it. He knew the surface-thinking, over-dressed type that believed that life was only to be had in the big cities. However, he instinctively felt that there was something worth while in the young man before him. So he said banteringly:

"From New York, eh? You know something? The bossy, big-brother attitude that New York takes towards the other cities of this country is sure-fire inspiration for the comic section in the daily papers of the other cities!"

"But, my dear sir," said Gay a little loftily, "the brains of the country are in New York."

"Yes, but the brains of the country were not born there."

"Come now, this is a little strong, isn't it?" asked the young man, his jauntiness somewhat abated.

"Strong? Not at all. True. Perfectly true—and therefore sensational, to use a pet phrase of the 'yellow' element in your profession."

"I like your frankness anyhow," said Gay in a subdued tone. "I am going to be in this town for a few months, and want to get a taste



of home life—the back-to-nature stuff—while I'm here. Living in hotels around New York is artificial, I admit."

"Sure, I'll fix you up. I know an ex-war correspondent and globe trotter with whom I feel sure you will be happy. Wait a minute till I get his address."

Gay wrote the name and address, thanked the clerk and left. Then the thought flashed through his brain: "Maybe we New Yorkers can learn a thing or two after all from the people in the small towns."

It was twilight as he stepped out of the front entrance of the little hotel and into the main street of Provincialville. The street wore a holiday aspect. There was joyousness in the air. The spirit of youth was abroad. A throng of young people of both sexes passed and gave him the glance that indicated that he was known as a stranger. The ringing laughter of a radiant girl made him tingle all over. He longed to join their ranks and to show them that he too possessed human qualities. He followed the trend of the crowd. It led to a charity bazaar.

A quarter gained him admission to the gay, light-hearted throng. No sooner had he entered than a bevy of girls gathered round him and assailed him with promises of winning anything that his heart desired. One girl in particular



attracted his attention. So as to get a chance to talk to her, he asked:

“I’ll take a chance. What have you got?”

“I’m selling box seats for the show—movies and the minstrels. Do take one to help the bazaar. You look prosperous.”

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do,” said Gay. “I’ll take a whole box if you’ll sit in it with me.”

The girl’s eyes flashed. Maie Courtney in a box with a strange young man! What would Provincialville say? But then at a charity bazaar convention is a negligible factor! Besides, the young man was apparently a gentleman!

“I’ll do it just because—well, because you thought I wouldn’t,” responded Maie, laughing roguishly.

“I’m from New York. Only a few hours ago I told myself that this was a dead town. But I take it back. By George, you girls here have freshness and sparkle about you that the Broadway varieties would sell their souls to have.”

“You say nice things so nicely that I enjoy them even if you don’t mean them,” said Maie smiling sweetly.

“But I do,” protested Gay.

A bugle blown by a rather poor bugler sounded.

“That’s the signal for the show now,” announced Maie.



“Lead me to it!” exclaimed Gay.

Everybody in Provincialville knew everybody else. Consequently, Maie was truly “the cynosure of neighboring eyes” as she walked through the crowd with Harry Gay from Broadway.

Lillian Martin, who was considered Provincialville’s most beautiful girl after Maie, said to one of her friends:

“There goes that Maie Courtney again! One new man in town and she has him. I don’t see what men see in her anyway.”

Her companion came to Maie’s defense.

“Lillian, you never fail to take a shot at Maie. Why do you do that? You know how sweet she is to everybody. Why, when I lost the elocution contest to her in the High School she was gracious enough to say before everybody: ‘Dorothy, the judges gave me first place, but I really think you deserve it.’ Now, how many girls would be that nice?”

“Oh drop it all,” said Lillian Martin, abruptly.

Meanwhile, Maie and Gay had seated themselves in the improvised box that Provincialville’s best pavilion afforded.

A “tragic” two-reel comedy opened up the program.



"I love the movies," said Maie enthusiastically. "But I can't see through those awful slap-stick comedies.

"Same here," responded Gay. "But I tell you a fine comedian, Lasfair Dougbanks, the man with the million-dollar smile."

"Oh, I'm just crazy about him. By the way, how do you think I'd look in pictures?"

"You'd look mighty good to me."

"No fooling. I'm serious. I expect to go in them soon, you know."

"You do? By George, I used to handle publicity on the side for actors at the Screen Club in New York. Maybe I can do something for you."

"I'd be tickled to death if you could," said Maie, her clear eyes sparkling with animation.

Novelty is the most wonderful thing in the world—especially to youth. And Maie and Gay were decided novelties to each other. Each had a refreshing influence on the other.

Maie scarcely slept that night, her enthusiasm was at such a high pitch. When she did sleep, she dreamt that she had become a great star, and that upon a visit to Provincialville she was received among her people like a lost princess.

Maie's vivacity and ingenuousness toned up the jaded spirit of Harry Gay. Smoking a



cork-tipped Egyptian cigarette, he contrasted his evening's experience with a first-night audience in New York, where the seasoned first-nighters dared the players to entertain or amuse them! He walked to the window and looked out at the stars, stretching languorously, as he thought: "Why, they still twinkle as they used to do when I was a boy." Then he laughed half aloud as the thought came to him: "That's more than some of the Broadway variety do!"

### CHAPTER III.

Harry Gay finally got settled in the home of Forrest Furlong, landscape gardener and former war correspondent.

Jack had shown some little talent for writing and was eager to develop it. His present course in shorthand and book-keeping at the local commercial college did not satisfy him. Accordingly, he went to Mr. Forrest Furlong, who was Provincialville's philosopher.

Uncle Forrest, as old Forrest Furlong was affectionately called by the denizens of Provincialville, was in his garden when Jack called.

"Good morning, Uncle Forrest," said Jack with an engaging smile. Uncle Forrest had liked Jack's engaging smile ever since he was a youngster who used to trample his flower beds.



“Why Jack, my boy, how are you? Haven’t seen you in ages. Where have you been?”

“Oh, plugging away at the old book-keeping course. But I don’t like that stuff. I want to be a real newspaper man. I like to write things. You remember you liked some of them, too?”

“Jack, my boy, the newspaper game is funny. Those who are in it and clever at it, find a fascination in it that will not let them drop it. But it’s a grind. Drudgery is not absent from it in some of its fields. But you are in the game now, and know that.”

Uncle Forrest filled his pail again to water the flowers, saying at the same time: “Jack, you won’t think I’m not listening to you if I keep bathing my pets. You know I consider myself Nature’s beauty doctor.”

“No; go right ahead. You’ve got everybody in Provincialville putting flower gardens in front of their homes.”

“Well,” continued the old man, “I have a young man boarder here who is just the one for you to meet. He’s a New York newspaper man. A little ‘up-stage’ as New Yorkers are apt to be, but a nice chap at bottom. He’ll be along any minute now. It’s nearly five o’clock, isn’t it?”

“Ten after,” responded Jack, looking at his watch.



“One more flower plot to water, Jack,” said the old man. “Then we can sit on the porch and talk about your new ambition.”

While Jack was talking, Harry Guy walked in the gate of Uncle Forrest’s home. He, too, was smiling radiantly.

“By George,” said Uncle Forrest looking him over from head to foot, “this country life is doing you good. Like the berg now, eh? By the way, I want you to meet Mr. Harrington, Jack Harrington, son of an old friend of mine. Mr. Harrington, Mr. Gay. I guess you two need put on no airs with each other. Will soon have your arms around each other’s necks, so to speak.”

But Harry Gay had a bit of enthusiasm that he had to impart: “I just saw a couple of classy Janes. By George, I never knew Provincialville had any blue-ribbon winners like them. One of ’em in particular was a peach.”

“Who was she?” asked Jack beginning to respond to Gay’s enthusiasm.

“A Miss Courtney—Maie Courtney. Was tickled to death when she heard I was from New York. She talked to me about the movies at the charity bazaar last week.”

Uncle Forrest, who knew how Jack felt about Maie said laughingly as he walked into his domicile: “I said you two fellows would



have your arms around each other's neck! I take that back. I mean at each other's throats!"

The two young men looked foolishly at each other, though Jack looked decidedly wilted. Gay, who had a generous nature, appreciated the situation thoroughly, and said!

"I trust you won't mind the slang I used in connection with your friend. You see, we newspapermen—in publicity work—use it without even knowing that we are doing so."

"Oh, that's all right," replied Jack, flushing a little and brightening up a bit. "Talking about publicity work reminds me that Mr. Furlong—you know Uncle Forrest—asked me to talk to you about getting into that business."

"All right, I have some 'copy' that I can give you now. I write the breezy stuff myself. If you run to the 'high-brow,' we can get along nicely together, I am sure."

Gay used slang too frequently. But slang has its uses. Only a narrow writer despises it. A perusal of the pages of Shakespeare shows how genius employs it; a perusal of American dailies shows how serviceable it is when talent handles it in the "headline." American slang is America's greatest contribution to the English language. It is worth more than the works of Poe and Hawthorne, philologically.



Harry Gay continued in his picturesque language:

“I’m going to cover a big story next Saturday that I can let you in on. It will be a riot if we put it over big. Front-page stuff with photographs. There is a chance of a life-time for a cub reporter like yourself. There’ll be a stormy session of the legislature, and I want to send in some copy that will be blue-pencil proof. Get me?”

#### CHAPTER IV.

It was a warm, clear afternoon in early June. Maie sat on the front porch of her home, and awaited the arrival of Harry Gay.

She had a pencil in her hand and was drawing a figure of herself as she imagined she would look on a multi-colored lithograph. Her whole being tingled with joy at the thought of the sensation it would be to have herself emblazoned everywhere to the world. She pictured what her name would look like in lights in front of a movie house on Broadway. She even decided on the color of the lights: a certain orange hue that showed without blurring from a distance—something that could not be said for the commonplace white ones!

She looked up for a moment from her pad, and saw Furlong approaching. She quickly and



deftly tore off the sheet that she was drawing on, put it in her purse, snapped the catch on this ever-present feminine encumbrance, and watched him as he walked jauntily in her direction, swinging his light cane with an air of dexterity that was not unpleasing.

As Gay entered the little gate, he said with a touch of ceremoniousness that was somehow absent in the "boys" of Provincialville:

"How nice of you to be waiting for me." Then he said laughingly: "Surely this is what might be called meeting one half-way!" Then he added: "Cheap wit; I know it. Sounds like the movie subtitles that are written by the half-baked literary lights in the editorial departments of the average American studio. The studios let a fool director waste thousands of dollars on the picture, and then refuse to pay for literary talent to write the only real literary part of the photodrama."

At the mention of the studio, Maie's eyes brightened like a child listening to a fairy tale. She knew that he regarded it as a workshop—in fact, called it a "factory," as was the common thing to do in the profession. But to her it was a crystal palace. And something of the magical aura of the studio clung to Gay's personality in her estimation.



"Mr. Gay, do you really think I would be successful in the movies?"

"You'd be a riot," answered Gay, lapsing into his picturesque slang.

The girl's hopes rose at this remark, and she said: "The director who was here last week taking a few scenes in 'The Painted Lily' told me I had a fine camera face. He promised to put me in another picture when he comes through again."

"Cameo face, is right!" said Gay playfully. "So say I."

"Please don't fool, Mr. Gay. I'm real serious; I would give almost anything to get in pictures—and so would more than half the girls in this town."

"Yes, and any other town, for that matter."

"Why, I even think the narrow, dingy dressing rooms are cute. And I love the very smell of grease paint and make-up—like—like Uncle Forrest used to say a war-horse likes to sniff powder."

"What does Uncle Forrest think about the movie idea?"

"Sh! I wouldn't mention it to him for the world. He says the theater business is awful."

"I must admit," said Gay, smiling knowingly, "that as a steadier of human beings, your



uncle is some gyroscope, and as for seeing things, he's some periscope."

"My Uncle Forrest says that going in the movies is worse than going to a fashionable girls' boarding school where education is imparted by a handful of books and a dozen trunks full of dresses. He wants me to be a bit old-fashioned. Says he traveled all over the world, and loves simplicity better than anything else. He says that the old-fashioned woman suffered acutely with hysterics and was just fortunate enough to know it, while the 'modern' woman suffers chronically with hysteria and is just unfortunate enough not to know it!"

"Whee! That sounds like the gush our managing editor used to write when he had a grouch." Gay continued:

"I admit that the theatrical game is a diamond-cut-diamond game in which fools pay for their folly, and knaves oftentimes reap where they have not sown. You don't suppose, do you, that a star would let a good-looking girl like you play in the same picture with her? Not a chance. Interest must be centered on her. That's what they call 'cat-stuff' in the studios."

"My uncle is a pretty sound thinking old fellow, all right. He says Kipling is wrong saying that the female of the species is more deadly than the male. His objection is that she is more



*lively* than the male! He says the *funniest* things sometimes. For instance, all that you need to start an ultra-conservative function with are little necks, low necks, and stiff necks!"

The cool afternoon breezes were refreshing them mentally and physically. They were in the mood that human beings will be in when the world grows older and wiser and forgets that the dollar-sign is the measure of the greatest art in the world—the art of living.

"That's all fine. But you come to New York with me and let me handle your publicity for you. These scientific high-brows tell you that if you tell them what you think they will tell you what you are. I go 'em one better. Tell me who's your press agent and I'll tell you who you are."

## CHAPTER V.

The finances of Maie's widowed mother were becoming low. Maie's only brother was two years older than herself, and had another year before he finished his course of study as a cartoonist in an art school in Chicago. As he showed great talent, she and her mother made sacrifices to keep him in the school.

Wherefore, she found herself at the age of eighteen filling the position of a saleslady in the



Palace Candy Store. Her employer, whose commercial instincts were broad enough to appreciate esthetics, made the candy shop a work of art—the sort of place that reminded one that architecture and interior decorating were as truly fine arts as sculpture or painting. Similarly, her employer saw in her beauty and delicacy that savored of the freshness of country air, a magnetic force that would appeal to the jaded spirit of some of his rich patrons. Thus, did Maie become part and parcel of the advertising novelties of a modern-business corporation.

However, she learned quickly that she was rather part of a machine than a distinct personality. For, to receive gracefully the patronizing attentions of bedizened, glib-tongued commercial men, of fanciful, flirtatious men-about-town, of lackadaisical college students, and other species of male interlopers that thrive in democratic America where all men—and some women presumably!—are born free and equal, was one of her chief *duties*.

One morning, Maie, while thinking with more than usual intensity of the picture career that might be hers, had her train of thought rather abruptly broken by the sharp but not unpleasant voice of Walter Winston, the package boy at the candy store. Walter, in common with



most American youngsters who earn their own living, had a very keen insight into the affairs of those about him.

“Oh, Miss Maie,” began Walter, while engaged in arranging a tier of candy boxes almost at her feet, “I saw your handsome newspaper friend this morning.”

“Well, what of that, Walter?” asked the girl, looking as unconcerned as possible. Then she added an admonition that she thought might close further observations: “You’d better keep your mind on your work and pile those boxes evenly.”

“Pshaw! I can do this with my eyes shut. Say, you know something? That fellow has it *bad* on you.”

“What in the name of Heaven is the matter with you? I only met Mr. Gay a few weeks ago.”

“I know. That’s just it. You only met him two weeks ago, and Willie Jones who works at the Orchid Flower Shop told me he sends you flowers every day.”

“Now stop your foolish talk Walter,” said the girl, turning her head in the direction opposite to the boy’s face to hide her heightened color.

Fortunately, at this juncture, the manager called the boy to the other end of the store,



and she was left alone to ponder the wisdom that this little creature had garnered. And she had thought that all the world was minding its own business and never gave a thought to Harry Gay's attentions!

When she left the store that evening at six o'clock she promised herself that there would be no more chance for talk.

At the corner, she met Jack Harrington. There was something in his face that told her that he was annoyed.

"Hello," greeted Jack, his eyes sparkling as they fell upon her. "May I walk home with you?"

"Certainly, Jack, come along."

"Maie," began Jack, nervously, "I have seen you with Harry Gay a great deal lately. Is he putting those movie ideas into your head?" But the girl interrupted him.

"Jack, be sensible. I'm old enough to take care of myself. Why do you preach to me?" Then she softened a bit as she saw the emotion that surged within the man at her side.

"You know, you are my best boy friend. Must I always tell you that? Yet you try to change things that might mean the greatest happiness for me. It seems to me that if you like me you would want me to be happy?"



“Forgive me, Maie. I didn’t mean to say bitter things. Besides, I work daily with Gay, and must admit that he is a nice fellow.”

They had reached Maie’s front gate. He looked glowingly at the girl beside him. She met his gaze frankly and laughed enigmatically at him! This little innocent laugh hurt him.

He wasn’t wise enough in the ways of women to know that when a woman laughs at a man, there is hope; and, conversely, when she stops, it’s time to fly the S. O. S. signal! This is what every woman knows; few men suspect; and some find out—and forget!

At the gate they parted. As he walked briskly down the street, she watched him with a touch of wistfulness. His loyalty was wonderful. She remembered how he used to carry her books home for her when she was in the early grades in grammar school, and how on rainy days he’d see that her coat was buttoned high. These little attentions. Yet—yet one had to *get on* in the world! That was what something within her called for! When youth has its eyes on the heights, it forgets that there are no mountains without valleys.

## CHAPTER VI.

Harry Gay yawned slightly, and stretched slowly, for it was seven o’clock on a July morn-



ing and the bright sunshine was streaming in his room.

He dressed with punctilio in a close-fitting blue suit, white waistcoat with gay ornamentations thereon, and a variegated necktie fitting closely a collar so high that it made him hold his head up like a member of the equine species at a brilliant horse show. He placed his new straw hat with its spectrum-defying hat band carefully on his carefully brushed hair, then looked at himself from all angles in the mirror before him. That is what life on Broadway had done to him! And, as the apparel did not proclaim the man in his case, it caused him to be rated a notch lower by conservative people.

At the breakfast table was the morning edition of the Provincialville "News." Big-lettered headlines met his eye. Was it a new war? Nothing so insignificant, if you please! It was a troupe of movie actors stopping over in Provincialville to get some "exteriors" while on their way from Fort Lee, New Jersey, to "the coast."

Gay gulped his coffee, attacked his orange with with a renewed vigor that caused that color to be added to his variegated tie, picked a speck of lint off his blue coat, and sallied forth.



In ten minutes he was in the office of the "News." He shouted to the managing editor, who was also the advertising representative, star reporter, and treasurer of the corporation:

"Say, why didn't you 'phone about that front-page stuff on the movies? Could have gotten a 'story' on them for the trade papers."

"Thought political copy was your long suit. Didn't suspect you were interested."

"Where's the crowd stopping?"

"At the Waldorf."

"Good, I'll beat it over there. So long old chap." And with a swinging gait he left the office.

There were only five in the troupe; the male and female "heavies," the character man, the male "lead" and the director. Gay knew the character man very well, as he had "put over" publicity for him many times as a "side issue."

"Well, Gay, old scout, what are you doing in this berg? Gee, it's good to see you again even off old Broadway."

"Nix on that berg stuff. These little towns are not as bad as they're painted. Say I've got a find in this town. She's star material and no mistake."

"That's what they all say. Anyhow, trot her over to-morrow, and I'll introduce her to our



director. He's a crab. But if she's a good-looker he'll be interested."

That evening Gay called unusually early on Maie. It was *his* evening. He managed to get two engagements a week with Maie, while Jack succeeded in getting three. So far Jack had the best of him! But he'd get there some time all right!

"Did you see the movie stuff in to-day's papers?"

"Yes, they'll be here only three days. My! but I'd like to see them work. Maybe, if I hang around, I'd get a chance to do something."

"Better luck than that. I am going to introduce you to the director to-morrow morning."

Maie jumped up from the piano stool, and her eyes flashed with joy. "You don't mean it," she said. "You're fooling."

"Cross my heart," said Gay playfully.

Her happiness was unbounded. In her ecstasy, she unconsciously ran over to Gay, grasped his hands in hers, and squeezed them until Gay thrilled through and through. Now, calling three times a week would be easy!

"What'll I wear," asked Maie nervously, anxious to make as good an impression as possible.

"Any old thing. You look good to me in anything."



"Never mind about you," said Maie, a merry twinkle in her bright eyes softening the import of her words.

"Well, ingenue stuff is where you shine. Therefore, get some soft, filmy, clinging stuff and you'll look like a million dollars. Have everything fluffy-like. You get away with that fluffy stuff in great style, simply eat it up."

"All right, Mr. Dressmaker," said Maie. However, in her estimate, his judgment of the clothes suitable to her temperament and make-up tallied with her own. It surprised her that a man could judge such matters so well, despite an apparent inaptitude to learn the small nomenclature of the dress-making art.

Gay felt he was making great strides with Maie; his stock rose to ethereal heights when he was permitted to leave her home at eleven that evening instead of the usual ten-thirty. He met Jack on the way home.

"Let's get a cigar, Jack. I'm feeling bully to-night." Jack knew that he had seen Maie that evening, knew that the movie company was in town, and putting two and two together, he could see no occasion for joyousness. However, in the many weeks that the two men worked together on newspaper assignments, Jack had learned to respect and admire Gay. That was the worst of it! If Gay were only a cad so that



he could have the pleasure of knocking his head off! If only—! The worst rival in the world to a man of principle is another man of principle; for *all* may not be fair in love and war.

It took the world until the year 1914 to learn that great truth about war!

Gay read the hand-writing on the wall when Jack said that he did not care to smoke.

“Old man, I’m going to take Maie Courtney down to see the director of the movie troupe that hit town this morning.”

Gay struck a match to light his cigar, and in the flare he caught a look of pain on his friend’s face that was unforgettable. In an instant, he appreciated that whereas the youth and freshness of Maie vitalized him like the purity of country air, she was everything to the man at his side.

Almost unconsciously, he asked gently:

“Do you mind?”

Ordinarily, Jack would have resented that blunt question with all of its personal, intrusive connotations. But it was spoken with such sincerity that Jack answered quickly:

“By George, Gay, you’re a decent chap. Let her go in the movies if she wants to. It’s selfish of me to want to ruin her career anyhow.”

“I’ll fix things,” answered Gay simply.

“What do you mean?”



“Never mind. Trust me, and everything will come out all right.”

And they went their several ways—thinking.

Arrived at his room, Gay took off his coat, put on his robe, seated himself comfortably in a morris chair, put his feet on the window sill; and thought and thought and thought. When the last ember of his cigar burnt out he said to himself: “I have a scheme that will keep her out of the movies.”

Jack in his room in rather wilted fashion also thought—and felt and felt and felt. He too came to a decision. It was this: “I’ll do my best to put her into the movies.”

The following morning was bright and beautiful. At eleven-thirty Gay was to call for Maie to take her to the Waldorf to meet the director. But at ten over the telephone he “lied like a gentleman.”

“Yes, I’m sorry Maie. The director is an old grouch and said that he wouldn’t waste his time talking to an amateur.”

“Nothing can be done then?”

“Nothing.”

Maie cried until her beautiful eyes lost their lustre; she cried until her damask cheeks approached the paleness of the lily; she cried until her tremulous radiance gave way to a feeling of sheer lassitude.



## CHAPTER VII.

“Hello, Maie, how are you? Thought you said you were going to be in the movie company that’s in town? Dorothy Hastings said you were breaking your neck to get in.”

The speaker was Lillian Martin. One would suppose that to get Maie out of Provincialville would have been the height of Lillian Martin’s ambition. It was. But not with a movie company. For Lillian, too, had her eye on the same field, and certain it was that she could not play “second” to Maie in two things! Not Lillian Martin!

Maie answered gently, looking for a touch of sympathy in Lillian’s face:

“No, Lillian, I am not going in the movies. Why do you act so catty? Ever since I won the Beauty Contest at the Charity Bazaar last summer you have said mean things to me.”

“Oh, you just naturally think you’re it. Those simple dresses you wear and that Puritan-like smile, and that sort of thing, it all gets on my nerves, it’s all put on.”

“The men don’t say those things about me, Lillian, and men are unprejudiced judges of those things. Haven’t I always said nice things about—”



But Lillian Martin interrupted impatiently:

"Oh, you make me tired," and she strode off with her head held high.

Youth is a terrible period for a finely sensitized nature to live through. Youth in all its glory and innocence tries to squeeze the last ounce of happiness out of things, while Fate looks on mockingly and seems to say: "Do it if you can, I defy you."

The lines about Maie's beautifully formed mouth became a little tighter. Her eyes lost a little of their softness, but they burned with a new brilliancy. Youth was putting up a good fight.

Maie remembered that the morning paper had stated that the company would be working on Main and Vine Streets about noon. She left the store without eating any lunch and walked over to the "location" that the company had chosen.

The street was filled with spectators. The director was hoarse from shouting to the crowd to keep without the camera lines. Provincialville wore a holiday aspect, so great was the enthusiasm over the movie company that the local chamber of commerce had secured for the city.

A few scenes on the sidewalk were played between the "heavy" woman and male lead and the character man. Then the director took up



his megaphone and shouted to the male "heavy" who was assisting in directing:

"I'm ready for that scene with the extra."

A machine bearing the heavy and the extra drove up.

The extra was a woman—a youngish woman. She was none other than Lillian Martin!

A round of applause went up from the crowd as Provincialville's first movie actress began her work. Maie watched her with a sinking heart. Lillian proved to be self-conscious and "camera shy." The director rehearsed her ten times before he could make her bow the way he wanted. Finally, in desperation he whispered to the camera man:

"We'll simply shoot up film, I guess, on that ham. The light is fading, and we have several scenes yet on this location."

So as to get rid of the crowd, the director gave the following false order to the chauffeur who was driving the troupe:

"Out to the old mill. It's two miles from here I think."

The crowd lingered until the camera-man had gathered all his accoutrements, then slowly dispersed in all directions. Lillian Martin was escorted in queenly fashion to a waiting automobile. However, the plaudits of the crowd were somewhat lukewarm after they had watched her



antics before the camera. Maie walked quickly back to the candy store.

“Miss Courtney, you do not look well these days, you seem to have lost your high spirits,” said the manager of the candy store when she arrived at the store.

“Just a headache, a touch of spring fever,” answered Maie, trying to smile in the old way that made customers wait to be served by her rather than have the other salesladies attend to their wants.

When Maie left the candy store that evening at six o'clock all the fire and ire in her gentle, but firm nature, was rampant. She resolved to carry things by storm. Her first impulse was to go directly to the Waldorf to meet the director and have him tell her personally that she was unfit for the pictures. However, on second thought, she decided that this conduct was too bold and unladylike. Finally, an inspiration struck her. She would get the photographs that won her the Beauty Contest at the Charity Bazaar, and send them with a note of explanation to the director. Yes, that was the proper thing to do.

She picked up the evening paper to look for the names of the troupe. The director's name was I. B. Wild. What a strange name, she thought. She remembered what Charlie Mason,



the property man, had said about directors in general. But she dismissed his pessimistic philosophy quickly. It is easy for youth to dismiss unpleasant truths. Besides, Charlie admitted that some directors were gentlemen! Why not Mr. I. B. Wild? She concluded that the ethics of the movie and theatrical games justified a lady in writing to a gentleman about professional matters without previous introduction.

Accordingly, she wrote the following letter:  
Mr. I. B. Wild, Motion Picture Director, Waldorf Hotel, City.

Dear Sir:—I am sending you three photographs of myself in the hope that you might like them, and give me a chance to act in your company. I suppose the photographs speak for themselves, as they have not been retouched.

Respectfully yours,

MAIE COURTNEY,

1116 Vine Street.

Provincialville, U. S. A., Aug. 1, 1916.

When I. B. Wild, Esq., looked over his morning mail on Aug. 2nd, he said to his cameraman:

“Forty-three letters this morning—a dozen from men and thirty-one from women—all assuring me but one that they are leading material. And say that one is some queen. Look at these prints.”



“Classy dame sure enough. Let’s use her in a ‘retake’ on that street scene we made yesterday with that ‘up-stage’ somebody that the secretary of the local chamber of commerce foisted upon us. It pays to pay for your actors. These hams who work for nothing but glory and publicity are the costliest players in the world.”

In this fashion, did Maie Courtney make her debut in the movies. The director instructed his camera-man to “turn” after the first rehearsal. Her natural simplicity of manner gave her the naturalness before the camera that was required—the unaffected simplicity that makes children “clever” screen players. For a baby playing with its toes will “get” an audience when the facial—and usually surfacial—gyrations of the leading man over the kidnapped heiress will cause it to stiffen up in its seats. Undoubtedly, the chief defect in screen acting is that it contains too much “acting,” paradoxical as this may seem to the uninitiated.

There was a spirit of solidarity and interdependence about Provincialville, untarnished by the sophistication of the large cities, that made it a pretty good community to be born in. At any rate, Maie Courtney thought so when her little city paid homage to her just before she left its confines for Los Angeles. For Maie had



done so well that the director and all the players of the Sensatio Studios Company insisted that the movies were the proper field for her talents.

Maie was radiant amid the festivities that were given in her honor. She was never so happy in all her life. To think that she was going in the movies where she would be admired by tens of thousands of people daily all over the civilized world! She chided herself when the thought came to her that this was vanity. She hated to think that this was vanity. She solaced herself with the thought that it was a legitimate ambition.

Two evenings before Maie left for Los Angeles, Harry Gay called on her. He explained that an extra amount of work kept him so busy that he did not even have time to 'phone. Maie, however, connected his absence with the telephone message that put her in the Slough of Despond. But she could not fathom the reason for his strange action, though she never doubted his good faith and sincerity.

"Mr. Gay," began Maie, smiling as one is wont to do when an evil is past and gone, "why did you tell me that awful fairy tale about the director not wanting amateurs? You almost broke my heart."



Gay looked at her closely. Then he smiled faintly, and averted his eyes. No; she could not guess! This puzzled him strangely. He thought: "Is it possible that Jack never told?"

Finally, he said quite frankly in subdued tones:

"I thought it might stop Jack's heart from breaking."

With heightened color and brightened eyes, she said laughingly:

"Jack and I have been friends from childhood. We used to go to school together. He's a dear boy, but he really doesn't——"

She reddened slightly and Gay broke in:

"Why, Maie Courtney, he'd sell his immortal soul to keep you out of the pictures."

"Sh-h," said Maie, putting the rosy index finger of her right hand over her mouth. "I'm going to write to Jack now and then. I'll never forget my old friends."

## CHAPTER VIII.

A motion picture studio is not a crystal palace where Art reigns supreme, but primarily a counting house where pictures are made that will prove the greatest common denominator of the public taste. A widespread appeal is necessary because the great cost of production would render a studio a philanthropic institution that



would be organized under the eleemosynary corporation laws if it were to aim merely at the artistic! Art must stand the supreme test of everything in our civilization to exist—it must be pecuniarily profitable. The nickels and dimes of the Johnny Smiths and Lizzie Jones in thousands of “suburban” houses amount to more than the quarters and halves of Percy Moneybags and Muriel Millions in a handful of “first” and “second” run houses in the theatrical district of the large cities. It is life first, and art afterwards.

When Maie entered the Sensatio Studios she was aglow with enthusiasm. Every fibre in her being tingled with delight. In her view it was truly a fairy palace where youth and beauty could disport themselves in never-ending variety.

“Mother, isn’t it all so wonderful? Just like a dream.” And she clapped her hands together in sheer delight. “And just think! It’s true, it’s true! I could shout I’m so happy.”

“Now, Maie,” said her mother, speaking in soft, low tones, “you must not let your enthusiasm run away with yourself. Remember, acting is work just like any other occupation.”

They had reached the executive offices by this time. Maie gave a card of I. B. Wild’s to the attendant, whose chief function was to keep peo-



ple out rather than let them into the studio. A glance at the card was sufficient. He no longer gazed askance at her. He smiled nicely and said:

“Through the door to your right, and straight back. You will find the director in the last little room. He’ll fix you up.”

Maie in her glee danced rather than walked back. Her mother was fairly out of breath trying to keep up with her.

Arrived at the cast director’s door, Maie said nervously:

“You go in first, mother. I wonder what he’s like. Hope he’s not a grouch.”

Mrs. Courtney walked in in simple fashion, while Maie, her gayety giving away to nervousness, trailed behind.

The selective powers of the cast director in this instance were nil. I. B. Wild, the feature director, had given him instructions about Maie the day before. Consequently, the cast director went through the simple ministerial function of getting her name, address, telephone number, and any plain, untouched photographs that she might have of herself. Then he requested her mother to wait in his office while he took Maie out to the studio proper where Wild was.

The stage carpenters were just “striking” a set when Maie and her companion entered the



studio. There was some delay in putting up the other sets, and so the director was idle. It was an open air studio, and the players were lounging around waiting for a rift in the clouds so that the sun could shine through in all its glory—and leave no room for excuses for poor photography by the camera-man!

The cast director left Maie at the studio door. Maie caught a glimpse of Wild among some unfinished sets, and walked over to him.

His countenance did not wear the look of zeal that one expected in a sincere advocate of an art, but rather a look of discontent with things in general. A glance at his slightly upcurled lips and uneasy eyes suggested a nature that showed laxity in all matters. It was a nature that loved leadership vainly for the sake of leadership, and having failed to rise to a great place in his profession, he sought to give vent to his wounded vanity by sternness in his treatment of the players under him. He masked his true nature very cleverly. But he forgot that whether one pursues a course of action or inaction, utilizes word or deed for self-expression, in the end the true nature shows itself. But in his philosophy of things, in his code, if things wore a pretty veneer—if arts and wiles and blandishments accomplished his ends — the



world would wag along as usual and ask few questions.

“There’s the little beauty,” said I. B. Wild, as he beckoned Maie to be seated on a chair in a drawing-room set. The actors were in other parts of the studio and not within earshot of his remarks.

“Good morning, Mr. Wild,” said Maie, smiling graciously.

“Good morning. Take off your hat, please, Miss Courtney, so that I can see your hair again. It is beautiful and should photograph one hundred per cent.”

Maie did so, and blushed violently at the compliment.

“Yes, it is pretty. Brush it up from the forehead a little.”

Maie did so.

“No,” said Wild shaking his head, “the other way—the way you had it before, is best.” As he spoke he touched her hair deftly. She said simply:

“Oh, I can fix it all right. Even without a looking glass.” And she reddened slightly.

Wild shot quick, strange glances at Maie that made her feel uneasy. She attributed them to nervousness—she was “seeing things.”



“Stand up, Miss Courtney, please. I want to get a good look at your size and—and proportions.”

May blushed violently.

“Yes,” said Wild, surveying her with more than professional approval, “you’ll do splendidly for the ingenue role in ‘The Tinted Rose.’ Come Thursday at nine. The players are due at the studio at eight, but nine will do all right for you. I’ll see to that.”

As Maie rose to go, she said:

“You’ve been very kind, Mr. Wild, and I certainly thank you.”

“That’s nothing at all. By the way, don’t bother with any of these fellows around this studio. You come to me when you want to know anything. I’ll look out for you, see?” And he reached for her hand. She quickly pulled it away, and exclaimed:

“Mr. Wild!”

“Oh, you little Puritan,” said Wild. The girl in her innocence thought the whole matter a masculine prank that was a tribute to her comeliness.

Wild put a “heavy” man who should have been carrying trunks, instead of wooing the art of Thespis, through rehearsal on some difficult scenes. Then he walked over to the execu-



tive and editorial offices to see the scenario editor.

"Say, Jerome, I want you to develop—build up—the part of the ingenue in 'The Tinted Rose.'

The scenario editor frowned.

"Sorry. Can't be done. Would kill the plot."

"To h—— with the plot. Change the plot. You've got it soft here, anyhow. Get busy."

"Well, I'll do what I can, Mr. Wild," answered the editor meekly, appreciating that Wild had a "jerk with the management" that could make it very uncomfortable for him. It was current gossip at the studio that he had "something on" one of the officers of the company when the latter was a vaudeville actor.

Wild walked moodily back to the studio. On the way he passed the cast director, who smiled enigmatically.

"Well, what are you grinning about from ear to ear?" asked Wild.

"Some kid, eh?" answered the cast director.

"Say, is this thing studio gossip already?"

The cast director smiled more broadly than ever, and said:

"You must think people are blind. But say, take a tip from me. She's not your kind."

"What do you know about it?"



"She's the good kind—travels with her mother. See?"

"Mind your own damn business," answered I. B. Wild, and he walked off with indignation.

Thursday morning was hot, but Maie Courtney didn't know it. She was in a beatific state of mind that nothing could disturb. She dressed in a gray morning dress with simple lines. She skipped down the stairs to the dining room.

"No, thank you, mother, I don't want any breakfast. Just a little coffee, please. You know I literally live on excitement."

"No wonder you are high-strung and temperamental and that sort of thing," answered her mother, "coffee, always coffee."

But the admonition went over Maie's head. She visualized the studio as clearly as the wonderful photography that consistently issued from the Basky studios.

At eight o'clock she was at the studio. She was greeted by the cast director with the homage that friends of I. B. Wild always received at the Sensatio Studios.

"Suppose I show you through and around the studio," said the cast director.

"That'll be dandy. Would be tickled to death. And do tell me something about directing pictures. Directing must be wonderful and directors wonderful men."



“Directing properly performed is wonderful.”

“But you didn’t say directors were wonderful?” Maie asked naively.

“Shall I be polite or truthful?” queried the cast director with a knowing smile.

“Both.”

“Impossible!”

“How?” asked Maie artlessly.

“You see, the truth is, the majority of directors should be ploughing the fields or carrying trunks. However, there are some genuine artists among them, and would be considerably more if the managements of the various studios would make native talent rather than years of experience the test of a man’s ability to direct his fellow men and women. The chief function of a director is to direct, of course. The chief element in directing anybody or anything is the quality of leadership. And leadership is in-born.”

## CHAPTER IX.

While Maie in Los Angeles was climbing the heights, Jack in Provincialville was steadily rising in the newspaper field. His easy and natural style gave him the position of assistant editor; his genial manner and energy gave him



the position of advertising manager. Of course, it is not unusual for a newspaper man to hold more than one position on a daily in the small cities.

Maie's letters to Jack came pretty regularly once a week. It was a poor week when she did not hear three times from him. For the first two months the note of enthusiasm in her letters did not wane. In her last letter the enthusiasm fairly leaped from the page. Then came a letter that was non-committal in spirit. Then two weeks passed, and Jack did not get a line. He wired to Charlie Mason concerning her health. He received a letter from Charlie which gave him an inkling as to the trouble. One line in particular was significant: "I tink, Mister Jack, dey is makin' tings putty hard for Miss May; she is too nice for dese fellers in de show business, like I said in de teatre dat day."

Jack did not eat supper that evening. He was at the office of the "News" at five o'clock—two hours before his usual time. When the managing editor strolled in at seven-thirty, he was pounding the keys of his typewriter at break-neck speed.

"Hard at it, Jack?" asked the managing editor. "There is no need to kill yourself. That copy I gave you can wait. It's only feature



stuff, and if it doesn't go in this Sunday's issue, it will keep for some time in the future."

Jack was so deeply immersed in his work that the voice of the managing editor startled him. Without taking his eyes from his page he answered: "I want to get it off my hands." He wrote a few more paragraphs, then walked over to the managing editor's desk and said:

"Mr. Harrison, how soon could you get a man to take my place? I'm going to leave Provincialville."

"Leave?" asked Mr. Harrison, dazed at the question. "Why, Jack, you're just getting the hang of this game. I hope you've not outgrown Provincialville. If so, that's a bad sign. I figured you to be immune from the allurements of the big cities—too level-headed for that sort of thing. Possibly you are dissatisfied?"

"Oh, no!" answered Jack in a tone of unmistakable sincerity. "It isn't that. You see——" He flushed furiously.

The managing editor smiled knowingly. He remembered that there were certain letters that Jack always wrote with pen and ink—and men who use a typewriter hate to write in "long hand." He smiled indulgently, and asked:

"Is it as bad as that, or perhaps, I should say, is it as good as that?"

Jack smiled faintly, and answered:



"You're getting warm, as the children say. Yes, I'm going to Los Angeles."

"Come now, be sensible. Leave the lady alone. You know what they say about distance lending—why, when I was a young man——"

"You don't understand, Mr. Harrison," interrupted Jack, nervously fingering the machine before him.

"Oh well, if it be a Barkis-is-willin' condition that you are going to meet, I agree with you."

"Not that," answered the young man. "But the lady needs me—I think."

"Don't take yourself so seriously. She'll admire you more if you hold down your job if she's the right sort."

"Mr. Harrison, you know what the average stage manager or director is. Well suppose——"

"Oh, I see," answered the managing editor, whistling softly. "You have specific grounds for fear, then?"

"Not exactly specific, but enough to worry me just the same."

"All right, my boy. I'll see you through this. I have a friend in the Associated Press in Los Angeles. I'll give you a letter of introduction to him, and he'll probably land you something. Better take along some surplus capital, though, as the newspaper game is pretty crowded."



When Jack got back to his room late that evening, he found a strange looking package that had come by parcel post from Los Angeles. Maie's name and address were in the upper left-hand corner of it. He opened it eagerly. It was a three-sheet, life-size lithograph of her. Not bad color work, thought Jack. The drawing, too, was fairly good. He took out of his desk some glass-headed tacks and placed the lithograph carefully on the wall space over the desk. Then he stood a few feet from it and gazed wistfully with a smile that said:

"That's Maie, my little Maie. She might have been truly mine. But then all the world loves her, and it's selfish of me to want her all for myself. To the great public she is an ideal woman. They cut her pictures out of magazines, and fall in love with her on the screen. But, after all, to them she is only a kind of dream woman. They don't understand. For, they never felt her warm little hand in theirs, and never had her soft, tender eyes rest on them."

## CHAPTER X.

Maie took her work seriously. It was beginning to attract attention; nay, more, jealousy—the surest sign of success in matters theatrical. The company's regular ingenue had threatened



to quit if Maie played in more scenes with her. On second thought, she decided she wouldn't. Not with such an "understudy!"

Maie had always remembered the kindly, fatherly advice that Charlie gave her in the Opera House in Provincialville, and now she made the old man her adviser at large. She pitied the poor old fellow, for as she saw him, education would have qualified him to hold a chair in a university.

I. B. Wild's attentions were becoming more persistent. She asked Charlie whether it was advisable to accept Wild's invitation to go with him to a cabaret.

"I tell yer, Miss Maie, wot I tink. I tink you is a level-headed little goil, wot kin take care of herself, and derefore I would go wid de director so as to not git him mad wid you. In a few more weeks, when de management sees wot you kin do, you kin be independent of the director and do as you please."

That afternoon the sky took on a cloudy aspect. As the company was taking exteriors, the troupe was dismissed for the day. Maie, as was her custom, went directly home from the studio. She consistently resisted the "afternoon tea" parties where cigarettes and cordials were the "proper thing."



The telephone rang. Mrs. Courtney answered it.

"It's Jack," said Mrs. Courtney.

"Tell him I'm upstairs. That you'll call me. I want to tell you something."

Mrs. Courtney placed the receiver on the table, and walked over to her daughter.

"Mother dear, Mr. Wild asked me to go with him to a cabaret to-morrow evening. Knowing how badly we need the money that I make, I asked Charlie about it. He said that it was advisable to go. Now Jack would never forgive me if I went to one of those places without telling him about it in advance. What shall I do?"

Mrs. Courtney was so shocked at the idea that she exclaimed without answering the question:

"Why didn't you tell me sooner about this—why?"

"But mother, I just learned it, didn't I?" answered the girl.

"Maie, this is all so horrid I can't think."

"All right, leave it to me. I'll fix things somehow." And she ran to the telephone with a light step.

Making a "play for time" so as to be able to think, Maie asked:

"Hello, Jack. How did you know I was home this time of day?" Then in serio-comic falsetto she said: "I'm a hard working woman, I am."



"I 'phoned the studio and was told you'd gone for the day."

"Disobeying me, eh?" said Maie playfully. "Didn't I tell you the studio 'phone is for business purposes only. First thing you know I'll be getting my two-weeks' notice, and poor mother and I will be walking back to Provincialville."

"I got around those studio rules all right. I told them I was a traveling correspondent for an art magazine, and had seen your picture in the 'White Book,' and if I had the time would drop around to get your picture and incidentally give the studio a little boost on the side. They swallowed it—bait, hook and line. You know how the studios eat up publicity."

"Jack, you are getting to be a good newspaper man—you—you l-lie so beautifully!" The golden laughter that accompanied the remark made Jack thrill with delight.

"By the way, I haven't seen you in years," began Jack laughingly. In his code this meant that four full days had elapsed since Maie had crossed his path of vision! He was very reasonable! And finally, the fatal question came:

"Got a date for to-morrow, Maie?"

So as to mask her feeling Maie answered teasingly:



“Certainly; with a fine, handsome man, too. But I’m not going to tell you who it is.” Fearing that her voice would betray her, she added hurriedly:

“Jack, pardon my rushing off, please. Mother is calling me from upstairs. Good-bye.”

Jack thought that Maie had terminated the conversation with unusual abruptness for one with such an even temper. But then women have so many whims and moods! Thinking thus he went back to the office with a light heart.

Arrived at the office, the city editor gave Jack a special assignment.

“Mr. Harrington, I have a pugilistic assignment I want you to cover. Kid Kidder is in town today and tomorrow. I want you to trail him, and get all the dope for news and feature stories that you can. Our sporting page is falling off. So get good stuff.”

There was talk afloat that Kid Kidder was “tearing things up,” and as the ramblings of a popular pugilist make copy for the guillible public apparently, Jack was consorting with the blatant and boastful element that follows the prize-fighting fraternity.

Jack followed Kid Kidder and his retinue of sycophantic hangers-on from one “sight” to another—through the whole gamut of saloons,



billiard halls, cabarets, and other places of amusement that constitute "real life" in the big cities. Jack was diplomatic enough to refuse the usual refreshment and yet show a spirit of good fellowship by reiterating boldly: "Sorry, old man. I'm on the wagon. Vichy for mine."

Finally, the "cashier" of the crowd, who was Kid Kidder's trainer and "right-hand man," suggested a "swell place" for supper. Accordingly, the gay party wended its way into the Frolic Cabaret, the mecca for late dining parties. They selected a table in a fairly secluded corner that gave them a good view of the rollicking, frolicking frequenters of the place. Jack's geniality made him a great favorite with the crowd, and he secured some good "stories" that would vitalize the waning sporting page. It was growing late, however, and he was nervously cogitating a scheme that would enable him to leave his companions without offending them, so that he could get back to the office to write up his copy in good shape for the following morning's issue. He looked at his watch. It was eleven-thirty. His copy must be in by twelve-thirty! It was fifteen minutes' ride to the office! And it would take thirty minutes to write "the stuff"! Fifteen minutes leeway!



The "cashier" ordered another "round" of drinks.

He was nervously beating a tattoo with his right foot under the table. A gay party entered the wide, ornate, overly lighted doorway of the cabaret. All eyes turned their way. It was a party of six—three girls and three men. Jack looked rather absently in their direction. The faces were unfamiliar to him. The last couple were beckoning to someone outside the doorway who apparently did not care to come in. Then a man, wearing a rather discontented look entered. It was I. B. Wild. He said something to the couple that showed his dissatisfaction. He, too, turned toward the doorway, and beckoned to someone without. Then his face beamed. A beautiful girl walked in timidly. It was Maie Courtney.

Jack, whose right hand was resting quietly on his chin, grasped his face suddenly. It was so sudden that it elicited a remark from one of his companions. Recovering his composure he answered: "That darn neuralgia. It gets me now and then."

Maie looked around the strange place rather wildly. Her eyes met Jack's. A pallor came over her fresh, lovely skin, and she clutched the table. She averted her eyes. I. B. Wild, noticing her nervousness, said jocularly: "You



little Puritan. You little 'fraid cat. Nobody is going to eat you up. You'll soon take to these places like a duck to water. They all do sooner or later—only a question of time."

She smiled faintly. Yes, youth was putting up a good fight.

Jack shook hands firmly with each of his companions. A round of boisterous adieus followed. He shot another quick glance at Maie. Painfully she averted her eyes. Jack then left the cabaret quietly by a side entrance.

Things were just beginning to "pick up" at the Frolic Cabaret. A chorus of pasty-faced, scantily-clad young women went through gyrations to staccato music that were supposedly contributions to the great art of dancing. The latest things, my dear! Imported from——. But no! The great, sad war made its genesis anonymous!

Owing to Maie's importunity the party broke up early—at a quarter before one. This proved very distressing—especially to I. B. Wild. She was a little Puritan after all, and worse still, signs indicated that she was congenitally so! Wild instructed the doorman to call four taxicabs. Maie lingered behind while the other three couples bid her and Wild good-bye effusively—too effusively, she thought. They en-



tered their respective taxicabs, and went their several ways.

Then Maie developed an abnormal amount of fire and steel for a Puritan. It disconcerted the masterful and diplomatic I. B. Wild.

"Mr. Wild, we will catch the one o'clock car. I am not going home in a taxicab."

"Cut out that old-fashioned stuff, will you?" said Wild, a note of unconscious roughness creeping into his artificially smooth voice.

Maie's eyes flashed, and she replied firmly:

"We are going to catch the one o'clock car. It seems to me that you might show some deference to a lady's wishes in these matters."

The diplomatic and artful Wild appreciated that he was playing his game too strongly—that he had missed his "cue." With extreme delicacy, he said:

"All right, little lady, all right; as you please."

But inwardly the suave Wild boiled. They all "fell for him" in time! Was this little country lass going to outwit him? That was not possible in his philosophy.

The next morning at the studio, the suave, diplomatic, artful Mr. I. B. Wild was in a bad frame of mind. One of the actors put it very neatly: "The old boy has a grouch on this morning. We'll catch hell, I guess. Some Jane



must have put one over on him. He's some high flier, he is."

Wild sat in his private office, and bit the end of a black cigar savagely. He muttered half aloud: "I'll bring her to her senses all right. She won't last a week around here when my plans to fix her commence their operation." Then he set forth to put the machinery of his plans into action.

Wild walked over to the room devoted to the publicity department. "Where's Jimmie Jackson," he asked the office boy.

"Mr. Jackson'll be back in a minute," answered the office boy meekly.

Jackson entered the room.

"Say, Jimmie, cut out that special publicity I gave you on Maie Courtney. She's a ham. Thought she's all right, but see she isn't. No more lithograph mention, either. Get me?"

"O. K.," said the publicity manager laconically.

Then Wild entered the office of the scenario editor.

"Jerome, old man, I'm sorrw about the unpleasantness we had the other day. Was a little upset about one of those infernal stage carpenters. By the way, I've decided to leave the plot the way it is in 'The Tinted Rose.' So



don't trouble yourself to build up the ingenue role."

"Thank you, Mr. Wild," said the editor simply.

Wild stopped to light his cigar. He left the editorial office. On his way to the cast director's office in one corner of the carpenter shop, he smiled cynically, as the thought came to him again: "I'll bring her to her senses all right."

In rough tones he said to the cast director: "You were putting your nose in my affairs about Maie Courtney. Now take my orders regarding this young lady. From tomorrow morning on she is to dress with the extras. No more special private dressing room for her. See?"

"All right. But you needn't get so hot about it. You can't bulldoze me the way you do others around here. I know you, I. B. Wild, and you know it. So put on the soft pedal when you talk to me."

Then Wild decided to add the crowning event to his diabolical schemes.

He sent for Maie.

She was radiantly happy. Did it mean promotion? It must be something good! Yes, after all, Mr. Wild was nice to her, despite studio rumors of his character! Possibly these rumors were wrong and unfair, anyhow! The taxicab



incident? Yet, that was conventional in the theatrical circles! He was entitled to the benefit of the doubt!

“Good evening, Mr. Wild,” said Maie smiling sweetly, as she entered the director’s office.

He ignored her greeting. His present sternness, in contrast with his former effusiveness, disconcerted her. He said bluntly: “I have the part of a ballet dancer in a tough dive that I want you to play. This part ought to suit you well.”

“But, Mr. Wild, I thought I was to play ingenue roles only. You told me so yourself.”

“Say, see here, you play what I want you to play or nothing. See? In a very low-cut gown, and the lower part a little above your knees, you ought to look real cute, as you might say. Think so?” And he laughed cynically, as he cast a leering glance at the beautiful girl beside him.

“You’re positively insulting,” said Maie.

“Oh, am I? Well, I’m boss anyhow. I’ve got the upper hand on you. I know your financial condition. When we directors can’t get a girl any other way, we see that she starves until she becomes—well, reasonable, we’ll say.”

“So that’s what you pay for success in the movies sometimes, eh?”



"Yep," answered Wild, a lecherous smile coming over the hard, coarse lines of his face, and an ugly, beastly look creeping into his uneasy eyes.

"Well," said Maie, facing the man before her tremulously but bravely, "I'll give you and the others like you my final answer."

She tossed her head defiantly in the air, revealing an exquisite profile:

"I may be a failure as an actress, but I'll be a success as a woman."

## CHAPTER XI.

Two days after the evening that they faced each other in the cabaret Jack called on Maie.

"Jack, if you still have faith in me, you must not ask questions about that party. Some day I'll explain."

"Of course I have faith in you, Maie," he replied, a strange beautiful light glowing in his clear eyes. "But it hurts to see you in such company, it hurts terribly; more than you can ever think.

"It's so nice of you, Jack, to say that. I don't know how I'd manage sometimes if it were not for your friendship and loyalty." She checked herself suddenly; she realized the implications



of her speech. But it was too late, for Jack asked quietly:

“Are things as bad as that? Maie, listen to me, why don’t you tell me the truth about all these matters? Why keep me in the dark? If Wild or any other director should ill-treat you, I’d—by heavens, I’d——”

“Jack!”

“Maie, I mean it. I’m afraid I’d stop at nothing. A human being can stand so much—but there’s a breaking point to all things.”

“Be sensible. There’s no need for your fears.”

“Why, Maie, only this morning Charlie told me that Wild took your private dressing room away from you. Now, I’m no fool. I know the game that animal is playing. He’ll bend you his way or break you. And Charlie told me other things, too.”

Maie flushed to the roots of her hair. She wondered what other knowledge Jack had garnered from Charlie. She began to cry. If he knew the scene in Wild’s office! What then?

“Please, Jack, don’t cause any trouble at the studio. I’ll fight as long as I can fight as a lady. When I can’t, I’ll admit defeat.”

Jack replied enigmatically, a faint smile coming over his strong face:



“I promise you I won’t cause any trouble—a-at the studio!”

“Jack, don’t get into trouble for me, please.”

“All right, then, I won’t do it for your sweet little self,” he said playfully. But the smile vanished quickly, and he added firmly: “I’ll do it in the name of human decency, I’ll do it in the name of all good women.”

“Jack, your anger is running away with you. You don’t mean you’ll ki—”

“Of course not, Maie. But I’ll guarantee to kill the biggest part of him—his vanity. As they used to say in the ten-twenty-thirty melodramas, ‘Me an’ dat feller has to square accounts’.”

The girl looked across at the man before her in amazement. Was this the little boy who carried her books home from school when she was a little girl? How came the gold in his nature, and whence the dross in some natures that throve under conditions of ease and luxury? These things puzzled her strangely.

Jack asked quietly:

“Maie, I’m level-headed. Why don’t you make me your confidant in all these matters? You seem to keep me, so to speak, on probation.”

“Maybe,” said Maie laughingly, “I’ll make it approbation.”



“Maie, you don’t mean it?”

He reached for her hands. She removed them gently.

“Jack, behave yourself.”

“Maie, you artistic people are awful. You want everything just so.”

A soft light shone in her eyes, as she replied:

“A woman wants everything *just so* but a man.”

## CHAPTER XII.

It was four o’clock on a Saturday afternoon in early September. Jack sat at his typewriter working as he never worked before, every muscle in his face tense. This was the day that he had set to square accounts with I. B. Wild.

He got up from his chair and paced the room. He looked out of the window at the hurrying crowds below. A cool breeze gave him momentary exhilaration. Then the tense expression came back. He was thinking—thinking deeply, broadly, humanly. He reasoned thus:

“There were certain ugly facts in life that must be faced. One had to go through the mire at times. The great war—millions of innocent human beings suffering untold agony—showed how hideous life could be. Yet—yet, on the whole, it might be worth while. Who could say? And what was the humiliation of one beastly



man like I. B. Wild in the sum total of human suffering? Yet pity had its place in life! But pity could be weakness under some conditions! That was the rub! Weakness? Thinking too much about certain things was madness—thinking was the curse of the gods! Yes, in the final analysis, instinctive feeling was right! Yet——”

Thinking in this wise, he placed the cover slowly over his typewriter, arranged the papers neatly on his desk, and picked up his hat. With bowed head, he walked out of the office.

At ten minutes before six Jack stood in front of the Frolic Cabaret. The great crowds that flock the streets of the big cities on Saturday afternoon were greater than ever. And the Frolic Cabaret was at “the center of things.” Jack had figured on the central position and the great audience for his little drama—perhaps tragedy. He had hoped the latter might be avoided. Yet its possibility was not as remote as he would have liked to think. His brain was seething. But suddenly it grew calm and cool; he stared fixedly down the street. He was looking at the approaching figure of I. B. Wild. The same jaunty step! The same cock-sure air! A picture of Maie in the studio taking veiled insults from this cad flashed before his brain. Man’s primitive impulse to defend his mate arose within him. He was no longer Jack Har-



rington, a reasoning creature. He was a wild-eyed savage, like a soldier in a bayonet charge.

Wild was within twenty-five feet of him. He stepped back quickly, and rushed into the vestibule of the Frolic Cabaret. He rushed out instantly with a horsewhip in his hand. He went straight at Wild. An inch diagonal stripe across Wild's nose appeared. Unconsciously Jack cried out: "I'll decorate you with the cross of dishonor." The next tore the flesh in Wild's right cheek. Several passers-by grabbed Jack. He broke away and rained another blow on Wild's head. Then he was overpowered. He shouted wildly to the crowd: "Yes, yes I horsewhipped that animal. I did it publicly on purpose. He's the big director at the Sensatio. His name is I. B. Wild! His name is I. B. Wild!"

In due process of time and undue process of law (though in no State or Federal constitutional sense in democratic America, where all men are born free and equal—in Fourth-of-July speeches!) the case came up for trial. The case against Jack of course. The majesty of the law did not concern itself with I. B. Wild; for elusive crimes were beyond its ken!

Jack's case was sensational. Very! It was a great law case the papers said. The papers were right! For it involved an ounce of law



and a ton of publicity! Large Eastern dalies engaged special representatives to get the facts (and fiction of course) in connection with it. The motion picture producers condemned Jack's action at the same time that they itched to make him a star because of his great publicity value.

The case was tried before a jury—that hard-headed Anglo-Saxon institution that was invented to keep the law from stultifying itself when the doctrine of *stare decisis* goes lame! However, the present jury, like bad fruit, was carefully picked and packed. Ergo, the law could sail serenely on its way!

Pat Carney, the district attorney, opened up with sure-fire, vote-getting melodrama—so he thought!

“Gentlemen of the jury: You are called upon to find the defendant guilty of a most cowardly attack on a high-minded artist—a gentleman from whose brain emerges pictures that are shown all over the civilized world. And who was the attacker? He was an unimportant reporter who was looking for sensation and notoriety. This condition is intolerable, and so long as I am in the district attorney's office will positively not be permitted under any circumstances whatsoever.” (That very same morning, a red-necked politician—one of the “boys”



—had an indictment quashed wherein he was justly charged with unmercifully beating a crippled beggar.) With increasing heat, he continued: “I repeat this condition cannot persist so long as I am in the high office of district attorney. And the defendant was such a barbarian that he used a horse-whip to beat the gentleman I refer to.”

This gush continued for twenty minutes. It was a “sizzler,” as one of the police reporters put it.

The reply of counsel for the defense was rather maddening—to the blatant Pat Carney—in its quiet, satirical intensity:

“Gentlemen of the Jury: If my most learned adversary does not win his case with reason, he’ll do it with noise. But it seems to me that his arguments will appeal as little to you as ‘the rule of reason’—that wildly fantastic and richly humorous doctrine!—would to a towering juristic genius like Chief Justice John Marshall. Every sane lawyer in America knows that! Why, my most learned, distinguished, and esteemed adversary talks to you as though you honorable gentlemen” (here he remembered his “Julius Caesar”) “were packed, as though he were eager to make it appeal that you condemned the defendant by force of his persuasion. I am forbidden to tell you” (here he remembered the



oratorical tricks of another great Roman, to-wit, Cicero) "that the public of our great city is almost up in arms against the filth that obtains in the motion picture——"

"I object, if your Honor please, I object to counsel's statement," said Pat Carney, jumping up wildly from the desk before the judge.

Inasmuch as his honor held his position through his political affiliations and not his legal learning, he didn't know whether the objection was good or not. But he wasn't indecisive. Not his Honor! He was too well trained in politics. He and the district attorney held their positions by the same tenure. So he said:

"Objection sustained. And—and all others like it! I sustain 'em before they are made."

One of the lawyers in the courtroom burst out laughing at the ruling, and was requested to leave the "sacred tribunal."

Counsel for the defense knew that he had no right in law to make the statement—that it was beyond the evidence, not in "the record." But he knew enough about law to know that cases are not necessarily lost because the law is against one!

And he succeeded in inculcating in the minds and hearts of the jury the fact that grave personal attacks might be made on any set of jurors who refused to free Jack Harrington. They



saw the light, and followed it, even as they were willing to follow blindly the prosecution's side of the case.

### CHAPTER XIII.

I. B. Wild loved publicity better than anything in the world—before the public horse-whipping. After the above event, he had it thrust upon him—and didn't want it.

Even Wild's "awful jerk with the management" did not save him his position. Public opinion condemned him unqualifiedly. The good people of Los Angeles detested this awful blight that came upon their lovely city. Organizations of every character and description—commercial, civic, social, religious—took the matter up. Petitions were sent to the Governor of the State requesting a special session of the Legislature to pass an "intrastate white-slave" law that was the most drastic ever formulated. The subject was discussed in editorials and special articles in magazines and newspapers throughout the United States. News of the trial was carried on the front pages of all of the American newspapers. The case proved more sensational than a famous criminal trial in Georgia a few years before.

Meanwhile, however, Maie was "taboo" in the studios. She could get employment no-



where. The producers showed a spirit of co-operative opposition to her that would have done credit to the industry if it were used in the furtherance of legitimate objects and purposes. The idea of an "insignificant cub reporter" disturbing the even tenor of their ways!

Public opinion in a democracy is a potent force. The producers apparently lost sight of this great truth. But Jack didn't. He made the most of it. He wired Gay to get in touch with the magazine and newspaper interests in New York, to see how much per word they would pay for an "authentic story" of conditions. Ten cents a word was offered. He and Gay laughed at the offer. Fifteen cents a word—a very high rate! Still they refused. Finally, the largest syndicate in the country offered twenty-five cents per word for thirty thousand words. This was accepted.

After the first installment was printed the producers held meetings, more meetings, and still more meetings. This time they showed wisdom. They realized that opposition was simply adding fuel to the flames. The fact that Jack had become almost a national hero disturbed them. Why their most popular star did not number one-fifth the admirers that Jack had unwittingly won for himself.



Then the most natural thing in the world happened—something that anyone familiar with matters theatrical could have foreseen. One producer after another made secret offers to Maie. She could be the star of any studio in the land. She told Jack about the last offer that came to her—one thousand dollars a week for six weeks as the star of a five-reeler, and the finest kind of trade and general publicity to boot.

“Don’t take it, Maie,” advised Jack. “You hold the upper hand now. You’ve been through enough to make them pay you handsomely. They’ll make at least two hundred per cent. net on any picture they put you out in on those terms. Ask them two thousand dollars per week for ten weeks in a serial. They’ll accept your offer so quickly, it’ll make your head swim.”

And they did.

Noblesse oblige!

“Mother, it’s sinful to make so much money so quickly. And just think, only two days ago we were ready to pawn our jewelry to get back to Provincialville. It’s a funny world, isn’t it?”

Maie rose from her chair and walked over to the window. She gazed at the crowds below; for Maie and her mother were now occupying a suite of front rooms in the finest hotel in Los Angeles.



“Mother, I’d rather we’d stayed in that nice little bungalow in the outskirts of the city. This glittering hotel gets on my nerves. But then if we did that everybody would say we were stingy.”

“Yes, dear,” answered her mother. “Wealth brings its duties apparently as well as poverty.”

But Maie suddenly realized that this was no time for philosophizing. She had an appointment with the dressmaker in an hour that would consume the whole afternoon. The producer told her to spare no money on her wardrobe. And how she hungered for pretty clothes! It wasn’t vanity, pure and simple, though she was too human to lack that quality totally. It was sheer love of the beautiful! Pretty things were a soul-craving necessity to her. The sight of them vitalized her. She had always thought that it was a fool rather than a philosopher who said that beauty was only skin-deep. Why it was mind-deep, heart-deep, soul-deep.

The variety and bigness of things began to “get” Maie’s imagination. At first, she could not get the proper perspective of everything about her. Soon, however, her vision cleared, and she appreciated to the fullest extent that hers was a wonderful status that would make any woman’s heart jump with joy. The magazines carried wonderful photographs of her. The



finest product of the lithographer's art was used to announce her fame to the world. Marriage proposals and love letters came daily in the mails. Surely no queen had ever had such wonderful, such spontaneous, nay, more, such instantaneous homage bestowed upon her. Through it all she grew more buoyant, more beautiful, more radiant than ever. A great novelist was co-operating with a clever scenario editor in building a story around her personality; a great musical composer was writing special music to accompany the picture. The best director available was sent especially from New York to direct her.

Maie's new director was an unusual member of the species: a *rara avis in terris*; for he was both an artist and a gentleman.

"Miss Courtney, have you ever had the art of directing pictures explained to you?" said the new director.

"No; but I'd love to. Everybody just took it for granted that I'd pick it up as I went along. That's bad. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I believe in an explanation of fundamental principles to novices. Then experience supplements this knowledge nicely, and the new player learns the art properly; from the ground up, as it were, instead of floundering around guessing at the whole complicated matter."



“Now, the art of directing pictures,” began the new director, speaking slowly and distinctly, “is a happy or unhappy admixture of leading, even misleading at times, coaxing, cajoling, blandishing, driving, marshaling, and also, I regret to say, sometimes bull-dozing the players before the camera. And here, as in other artistic work, individual temperament is a big factor. Some directors work by dynamic, even volcanic methods, employing expletives eternally; while others use a quiet insistence and usually achieve deeper and finer results. There should be in all cases a strong bond of sympathy between the director and the players under him, if the most artistic results are to be had.

“Sympathy?” asked Maie, almost unconsciously as she thought of I. B. Wild. “How do you mean?”

“I use the term,” continued the new director, “in a broad, philosophical sense, of course; and in a big, human way. Tolerance, too, the director must have if he would bring the best out of his players. Look at it from any angle, the relationship of a director to the people before him is a human relationship. The director who is petty enough to get too big for his actors has the power usually—that is can exercise the authority—to make puppets out of them by arbitrarily making them do his bidding. But he



does this at his peril. For if they are puppets before him and the camera, so also on the screen will they be puppets. In short, the director is the unseen, but moving, molding force behind the pictures. It takes its coloring and tone from his personality quite as much as from the actors. He it is usually who finally makes or mars the illusion. Yet the great public never gives the director full credit for his work."

"How fascinating," said Maie. "My! but I wish that somebody had opened my eyes to some of these truths sooner. I've thought of a great many truths that you've expressed, but it is so satisfying to the mind to hear an authority express them."

The new director resumed: "When handling extras—particularly where there is a group of them in any scene—the more arbitrary the directing, the better, as a general rule. For these are usually only for atmospheric or local-color purposes, and are as close to true puppets as any human being has a right to be. But then one should not expect to extract gold from copper quartz. In a strictly professional sense, only 'principals' and so-called 'sub-principals' are 'actors.' The rest are—heaven only knows and heaven only cares! The extra is a part of the 'submerged' fraction that sociologists prate about. But they are entitled to humanity, and



at the hands of decent directors, they get it. When some writer writes the truth about the 'extra,' the editors will break their necks to buy the latest 'human document', and certain rose-colored visions concerning the art of breaking into the movies will vanish into thin air!"

"Yes," said Maie sympathetically, "the road of the extra is a hard one in pictures."

"Almost as hard as the road of a good girl who is pretty or charming," finished the new director.

Maie smiled knowingly.

"Now and then, Miss Courtney, you will be put into 'the melting mood,' to use the fine phrase of George Bernard Shaw, when you witness a beautiful photodramatic production. Then remember that the director had first to put his actors into that mood. You will wonder why that picture impressed you so tremendously when others of the same kind with a 'story' just as good apparently failed to impress you."

"Yes, why is that?" asked Maie.

"The reason you ask? Well, you can call the elusive element anything you please—'personality,' 'inspiration,' 'punch,' or what not. For what's in a name? One answer perhaps is this: Everything if it represents a great personality; otherwise, nothing."



“To what school of art does directing belong?” asked Maie.

“It belongs to the school of Realism. Realism is carried to the Nth power. No other art—not even the sister art, the drama, under Mr. David Belasco—is carried to such lengths along realistic lines. Sometimes, I suspect Realism is carried too far. For the public can see illusions and visions even only through the media of realities!”

“What are the requisites of a good director?” asked Maie.

The new director smiled as he replied:

“There are no rules for great artists. Each is an individual. However, I will answer you in a general way.”

He smiled again. There was a twinkle of humor in his eyes as he began:

“A good director should be alert, resourceful, versatile, inquisitive, omniscient: that’s about all!”

Maie laughed. The new director continued:

“Anyhow, he can, with the aid of a corps of assistants, somehow manage with such small talents! He must understand everything from ingenue ‘temperament’ to tenement-house tin pans; he must remember everything from the color of an actor’s face powder in scene one to



the style of his den slippers in scene one hundred and ninety-nine. He must keep his eyes on everything and everybody at one time—and at the same time never forget that there is one eye more important than his two. That is the camera eye. He must always ‘visualize’ the scene from the camera eye. If it does not look right from there, the scene is hopeless. There is only one point of view here—and no argument!”

“But,” interrupted Maie, “directing is a regular science, isn’t it?”

“It’s more than that. It’s an art and a science plus. And now let me tell you a point about which directors differ. Some directors proceed upon the theory that an actor should know nothing about his roles in advance but minutely follow the director’s interpretation just before the camera turns. In other words, the actor in such a case knows as much about his part as the American people know about the ships in its Navy Department—that is practically nothing.”

“What is your theory?” queried Maie.

“I believe in telling the actors the nature of their parts several days before the camera is ready to turn, allowing them to give individual interpretations to their respective roles. However, a distinction should be made between a good actor and a bad one; between an artist and a ‘scenery-eater.’ A good working rule, I be-



lieve, is this: You can't tell a good actor too much about his role; and **you can't tell** a poor actor too little—if, indeed, the latter will condescend to let you tell him anything! All of which is equivalent to saying that an actor's capability is in inverse ratio to his braggadocio."

"Whee!" said Maie, laughing hilariously. "That's certainly true though. The good players are always more reasonable than the bad ones. I've noticed that in the short time I have been in the profession."

"And now, Miss Courtney, let me explain why so many directors have 'nerves,' or at least 'temperament.' "

"You don't mean like Mr. Wild, do you?" asked Maie nervously, fearing that her last illusion would be gone if his conduct were justified.

"Oh, no. I'm talking about gentlemen. I regret as much as you do that so few directors are gentlemen. What I refer to is the great physical capacity required of a movie director. Not merely nervous energy and mental strain, mind you, but sheer brute strength. Napoleon said that the moral was as the physical as three to one in warfare. But not in pictures from the director's viewpoint. Not in pictures! Old Napoleon may have marched his soldiers up the hill, and then marched them down again, and



got a hunch that he was some general, if I may use slang. But that was because he never directed a mob scene in pictures! If he had, he would have found war after that a tame game, and would have blown out his brains from sheer ennui! You see, a director needs the physical endurance to drive a team of mules in the Southern summer's sun; the mental make-up to grasp German metaphysics when translated into the usual unreadable English with the ease of an unctuous French novel; and an emotional make-up as delicately sensitized as that of a sixteen-year-old school-girl. Given these qualities, you have a director—possibly! Less than these, you have an approximation! a *soi-disant* director; in plain English, a near-director.”

“Now tell me in a few words what constitutes good screen acting so that I may remember it,” asked Maie.

“Well, these few facts you might remember. There is something more than acting *for* a director. The great desideratum is to act *with* the director. For, a good picture in the making is a symphony, and, of course, the artists must be in concert. That is why music—the most expressive of the fine arts—accompanies the screen artists oftentimes when the director calls upon them to evoke the finer shades of emotional expression. In a word, the art of screen acting con-



sists in *repression with expression*. Martha Hedman in 'The Boomerang,' exemplifies this quality on the stage to a marvelous degree."

#### CHAPTER XIV.

Life now was full of wonderful things for Maie. Youth was in all its glory at last.

Her serial was strictly dramatic. But she got "comic relief" in her life in the fatuous attentions of a retired mining millionaire who made it a point to devote himself assiduously to the reigning queen of the movies in the queen of movie cities.

One day, in their suite in the hotel, her mother said to her:

"Maie, why do you accept the attentions of that old mining millionaire?"

"He amuses me, mother. He's so silly. I suppose I amuse him, too. So we're both pleased. Surely, you didn't expect anything 'serious' could develop between us?"

"I don't understand the younger generation, Maie," said Mrs. Courtney quietly.

"They don't understand themselves half the time, mother dear."

Someone knocked on their door. Maie answered it. It was a bell-boy with a telegram.

"Another congratulation from home, mother



dear, I guess," said Maie as she tore open the envelope bearing the telegram.

The message read as follows:

Jack in railroad wreck one hundred miles from Provincialville. Injuries apparently serious. Brought to hospital here.

"Uncle Forrest."

Maie burst into tears. She handed the telegram to her mother.

"Poor Jack has been in a wreck. I must go to see him. He's home in a hospital."

"Poor boy," said Mrs. Courtney. "Maie, I wonder whether they'll let you leave. You are just in the middle of the fifth episode you know."

"It isn't a matter of letting me. I am going even if they refuse to pay me a cent for my work."

"But Maie, dear, be sensible. You can't do Jack any good by seeing him. Probably the attending physician would forbid anybody to see him, anyhow."

"But I must, mother, I simply must. I never knew before——"

Mother and daughter gazed intently at each other.

"All right," added Mrs. Courtney. "Do what you can."



The next morning Maie was in the office of the vice-president and general manager of the Sensatio Studios at nine o'clock, though she knew that he never arrived before ten at the earliest.

"Miss Courtney, I appreciate what you say, but business is business," said the vice-president after Maie had stated the facts to him.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Maie. "I'll pay the salaries of all the other actors and also all others connected with my production who cannot be used in other productions while I'm away. I won't be gone longer than a week probably."

The vice-president's eyes glistened; he saw a chance to drive a hard bargain.

"Can't be done, Miss Courtney, can't be done. If you leave now, we'll call your contract off. We are paying you too much now. We'll lose money on the production."

Maie ignored the fairy tale about losing money.

"That seems unreasonable. Haven't these producing companies any feeling, any humanity?"

"We are talking business, not humanity, Miss Courtney."



“Well, call the contract off then; for I’m not going to put money ahead of loyalty.”

The vice-president called his assistant.

“Miss Courtney repudiates her contract with us. I want you as a witness to the fact. Is that correct, Miss Courtney?”

“It is,” said Maie.

“Now, Miss Courtney,” said the vice-president, rubbing his hands together slowly, and smiling blandly, “we’ll talk business again. You just repudiated a contract for two thousand dollars a week for ten weeks. I told you we were paying you too much. I repeat it. Now when you get back from Provincialville and your impulsiveness has waned, you can sign the same contract for seven hundred and fifty dollars per week.”

“I trust,” said Maie, smiling, “that if I were worth two thousand to you before, I’ll be worth it again. Besides, practically every company in the country has been trying to get my services!”

## CHAPTER XV.

“Oh, Lillian, did you hear the good news?”

“What good news?” asked Lillian Martin.

“Why, Maie Courtney’s in town,” said Marion Crane. “She got in this morning.”



“Oh, yes, I knew that. Nothing new about that. She’s running after Jack Harrington, I guess.”

“Lillian! How can you be so mean? Why, Jack has been in love with Maie for years. He tried to keep her out of the movies because he loved her. By the way, I met Mr. Forrest Furlong—you know Uncle Forrest?—yesterday afternoon and he said that after a thorough examination the doctor said Jack had sustained no internal or other serious injury, and would be all right in ten days. At first they thought he’d die.”

Meanwhile, Maie was talking to Jack in the hospital.

“Yes, nurse, please,” said Jack, smiling broadly, “you may leave for a few minutes. Miss Courtney and I have some movie business to talk over.”

The nurse laughed lightly.

“When business hours are over you can ring for me!”

“Cute nurse, eh?” said Jack teasingly.

“Too cute,” said Maie reddening. “What’s the idea?”

“I might marry the lady,” said Jack banteringly.

“Jack!”



"Sure! Didn't you hear her ask for a ring from me?"

"All right, Mr. Cleverness. You just show me the way out of this difficulty I had with the vice-president of the Sensatio Studios."

"Then she explained the nullification of her contract with the company.

"How many episodes did you complete?"

"Four and almost all of the fifth," answered Maie.

"Well, that's easy. You have it on the company. The vice-president was simply trying to bluff you because he thought you were from Provincialville. I'll make them pay you three thousand a week because of the nasty way they acted. They'll be glad to do it."

"How?" said Maie, her eyes sparkling as they rested with a quiet gaze on the man before her.

"Simple enough. A part of a serial is no good to a company. They must have it all. The exhibitors would virtually boycott the Sensatio reels in the future if the reason for their falling down on the subsequent episodes became known. Besides, they've spent a world of money on publicity that was based on the assumption that the ten reels or episodes would be made. Therefore, to quit now would be throwing away publicity money spent on the last six reels. And, of course,



in your case they couldn't possibly substitute another star. The public wants you—just you." Then blushing violently he added: "It wants you almost as badly as I do."

"Jack, be sensible!"

"Why be sensible? Harry Gay wasn't. He's engaged to Marion Crane because he wasn't."

"To Marion?" exclaimed Maie. "I thought Harry Gay would never marry. Do you remember him when he first came to Provincialville—the variegated neckties, the nifty walking cane, and other Broadway accessories to manliness! But Harry was a fine boy at heart, and outgrew the follies of his youth, as he might say."

"Yes," said Jack laughingly. "Since Marion took him into tow, as he might also say, she has him wearing a nice, conservative navy blue tie. That's what Provincialville has done for him!"

"Well, Jack, to change the subject, how are you feeling?"

"Oh, pretty good, considering the fact that I had three doctors trying to find something the matter with me. I believe they were disappointed when they found I was all right. Thought I had internal injuries."

"Found you hadn't," interrupted Maie. "That's fine."



“But I have,” protested Jack. “It’s my heart. It has been out of order for months.”

“Jack, you poor boy. You really don’t mean it?”

“But I do.”

“Then why didn’t you tell me about it sooner?”

“I tried to—but—but you wouldn’t let me.”

“You frightened me for a moment, Jack.”

“I did. That’s news sure enough.”

“To you.”

“Maie!”

“Yes, Jack, what is it?”

“I was thinking.”

“Yes.”

“I was thinking what you’d think—how you’d feel—I mean—if I were all broken up like a soldier from the battlefield.”

“Didn’t I tell you a woman wants everything just so but a man?”

THE END



## What the Critics Say About

### "The Photodrama--Its Place Among the Fine Arts" by William Morgan Hannon

The N. Y. Sun says: "The author has full command of the connoisseur's vocabulary."

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Prof. Hugo Munsterberg of Harvard, author of "The Photoplay, a Psychological Study," says: "It is a distinct contribution to aesthetics."

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The Theatre Magazine says: "Mr. Hannon establishes the right of the art of the photo drama to a place among the fine arts; in other words, that it has a field of its own, facilities and possibilities of its own. He has written entertainingly and without claiming too much."

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Epes Winthrop Sargent, author of "Technique of the Photoplay," says: "It is the pioneer work, I believe, in the second stage of the literature of photoplay. It has been a pleasure to read one who speaks with authority."

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The New Orleans Times-Picayune says: "The work shows a well grounded knowledge of the nature of both the drama and its silent counterpart."

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The Atlanta Constitution says: "A subject that is well written, fresh, and especially for the readers of 1916 who are interested in up-to-date subjects."

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The Jacksonville, Fla., Times-Union says: "The writer has taken the time to critically review the photoplay as a factor in the present day amusement life."



















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